THE GREAT AMERICAN BAND WAGON

E169 .M47 1928
Merz, Charles, 1893-
The great American band wagon

EXTRA
EXTRA
EXTRA
EXTRA
EXTRA
EXTRA
AIR CITY
AIR CITY

Ex libris
The Meadowlark

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-CAH-868

THE GREAT AMERICAN BAND WAGON

The GREAT AMERICAN BAND WAGON

By

Charles Merz

Decorations by Howard W. Willard

DOMINICAN COLLEGE LIBRARY
SAN RAFAEL, CALIF.

The LITERARY GUILD *of* AMERICA
New York MCMXXVIII

M559g

MAY 21 1929

18164

28_4903

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY CHARLES MERZ. COPYRIGHT, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, BY HARPER AND BROTHERS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

TO

E. S. M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Some of the chapters in this book are reprinted from Harper's Magazine, The Outlook and The American Sketch by the kind permission of their editors.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Once Open Road	1
II.	Caravan	11
III.	Sweet Land of Secrecy	23
IV.	Tom-Tom	39
V.	The New American Bar	53
VI.	Bigger and Better Murders	71
VII.	Plus Fours	91
VIII.	Roll Your Own Diploma	103
IX.	Home Was Never Like This	119
X.	Business Discovers Bathing Beauty	137
XI.	Gangway	153
XII.	The Silver Screen	169
XIII.	Vox Populi	185
XIV.	Ringside	201
XV.	Headline Heroes	215
XVI.	The Attack on New York	233
XVII.	Young America	253

THE ONCE OPEN ROAD

H.W.

THE GREAT AMERICAN BAND WAGON

CHAPTER I

THE ONCE OPEN ROAD

THIS is a good life we lead. It has plenty of bath-tubs, open forums, good roads, laundries, high schools, and department stores, but by comparison with its own romantic past it is admittedly short on sheer adventure. There are no trails uncharted, no corners of the country unexplored, no valleys to be linked with highways. We have all that is best and biggest in grand opera, rapid transit, hospitals, wheat fields, sky-scrapers, and extension courses, but this is not the country it used to be—not when all of us talk the same language, read the same news, and laugh at the same jokes in the same syndicated cartoons every morning. We have the fastest trains that run on tracks, but they take us through a series of Grand Union Stations. We are rich in ferries, but we have no boat-songs. We have the

greatest highways in the world, but we have lost our frontiers.

§

John Smith stood on the steps of his farmhouse in the hills of Connecticut in 1791, and watched his son load a wife, two barrels of flour, a Bible, three muskets, a Governor Winthrop desk, six volumes of Jonathan Edwards, and a cask of rum into a wagon certain to break its axles, said the father, before it crossed the state line after some days' travel into far-away New York.

Washington was President, but a Cabinet of the best minds had failed to measure up to expectations and the country was plainly going to the dogs. Franklin had died the year before. Prices were high. Coal had been discovered in Pennsylvania, but as a dependable fuel could never take the place of wood. Whitney was toying with the cotton-gin. Another wave of crime had swept New York. Manners and morals weren't what they used to be. There was no telling what to expect of the younger generation. Here was John Smith, Jr., scorning the hard-won acres wrested by his father from a stony soil and proposing to turn his back on all that was safe and sane and respectable for a wilderness filled with Indians on the fresh-water lakes, and the impossible name, Ohio.

John Smith, Jr., slapped the reins on the backs of two willing horses which were never to see their journey's end. And into the West, not guessing the test of patience and courage and ingenuity that lay ahead of them, not guessing the breadth of valley or the height of hill, stopping at the end of an hour to wrap more carefully the pewter dishes destined to be melted into home-made bullets, rode two pioneers.

§

John Smith, Jr., had never been a reading man, and the pages of Jonathan Edwards were still uncut when John Smith, 3rd, took them west with him. This was 1822. Ohio had been a state for almost twenty years, and for half that time, said John Smith, 3rd, it was no place for an up-and-coming man. Iowa beckoned glowingly. What was the use of staying in Ohio, when it had plainly reached its saturation point, when farmhands wanted robbers' wages out of all proportion to their work and the best land had been gobbled up by profiteers who asked $7 to the acre?

John Smith, 3rd, went west in a prairie schooner six years after the first steamboat sailed the Lakes and in the same year that gas-lights first lit Boston, back in the land of his grandsire. There was no

Governor Winthrop desk to weight his wagon for him: his father had scorned the useless little drawers and the gadgets with brass knobs, and sawed the whole top off, one rainy afternoon, to make a carpenter's bench with which he could not bear to part, even to equip a well-loved son on a stubborn journey of adventure. The desk stayed home, to be done over in a brighter colour by a later generation. But John Smith, 3rd, had a Boston rocker with a Turkey-work seat of Perry's victory and the latest thing in eight-day clocks. It was a Terry clock; and Terry had sold the patent rights for a thousand dollars cash, to launch America's first mass production.

Lafayette was coming back to the United States, and was suspected of wishing to profit from a lecture tour. Andrew Jackson had just been appointed Governor of Florida. Daniel Webster was denouncing blocs in Congress. Nobody could remember the second verse of the "Star-Spangled Banner." And in the spring of the year that James Monroe, indifferent to the just demands for adequate legislation to protect the interests of the farmer, promulgated a little-read doctrine concerning distant South America, John Smith, 3rd, lost his Terry clock crossing the swollen waters of the Mississippi.

§

John Smith, 4th, had no clock, no desk, and no Boston rocker when he left home for a land still closer to the setting sun. He had been down at the Buckboard Tavern, tippling—for John Smith, 4th, was a wayward son—when word came from a merry neighbour that gold had been struck near a town named Coloma, California.

John Smith, 4th, came home to tell his father he was going west that evening with two cheerful friends who were certain they could find their way to California. His father told him he was mad. The Smith family, said his father, had managed to amount to something in the world by keeping out of taverns, staying put and not jumping the fence at every wild idea.

John Smith, 4th, started west to California. He pushed his trunk to Council Bluffs in a wheelbarrow borrowed from a neighbour—for this John Smith had shaken his fist in his father's face and left home without a dowry—to join a wagon-caravan that was bound for El Dorado. A strange crew they were, twenty pious men and twenty rascals who quarrelled and swore and froze their way up the North Platte Valley till it lost itself in the Rocky Mountains of Wyoming. John Smith, 4th, never saw the far side of those mountains and never won the fortune he had planned to flaunt in his father's face. A few miles east of the Great

Divide, on a spot now marked by a Socony filling-station, this John Smith died of cholera.

§

Nevertheless, the family lived on. For a John Smith, 5th, remained. He had been a boy of ten when his father started west in 1849, and he had been left behind with a useless mother because there was nothing else to do with either one of them. He had been twenty-two in '61. He had gone to the war and been shot once in the leg at Chickamauga and twice in the leg at Nashville, and gone back home in '65 to settle on the Iowa farm his grandfather had willed him.

Iowa land went up in value. Grant succeeded Johnson. Custer made war on Sitting Bull. Edison played "Turkey in the Straw" on a crazy little phonograph. Iowa land kept gaining value. The Union Pacific built a railway across the Wyoming hills where the ashes of John Smith, 4th, lay mouldering in peace. Prosperity followed the hard times of '93. The whole world bought American wheat. And in 1910 Iowa land touched $180 to the acre.

John Smith, 5th, sold out in 1912, when he was seventy-three. He had no Governor Winthrop desk, no Terry clock and no barrels of flour to take west with him. But he had a block of stock,

a six-cylinder coupé and a barrel of phonograph records for his daughters.

In 1912 the Smith family finished its trek across the country and found a home in Pasadena.

§

It was a long haul from the trim Colonial towns of the Atlantic seaboard to the California coast. A restless, eager people who never wearied of the open road achieved it in a few short generations. Tirelessly the caravans crawled across the hills and valleys, spanning the country with new highways and turning the prairies under to plant wheat. First there was the settlement of the plains; then the push to the mountains; then the fresh impulse of immigration; then the doubling back of those who could not find what they sought beyond the hills and looked for it again in the haunts of their forefathers. Wherever rumour whispered that ore lay hidden in the hills or a kind sun baked a loamy soil or the coast-line threw its arms around a harbour, there went the multitude with its bedsteads packed in burlap on a covered wagon.

No-Parking signs line the highways now. The white bones bleaching by the road are the carcasses of cast-off Fords. The Indians shoot glass balls in the three-ring circus and iron cities have

been hammered from the little towns with trading posts and forts. Skyscrapers stand on the river's edge and the West is a settled land of farms. This is a day of macadam highways, golf links, lodges, drug-store bars, Spanish suburbs, non-stop flights and six-tube sets. But we are not static and we do not rest. Show us something that everybody else is doing, and we are off again—on our way to a ringside seat or a college degree, a church drive or a murder trial.

When the Band Wagon lumbers down the street we hop aboard it.

CARAVAN

CHAPTER II

CARAVAN

TAKE your car beyond its accustomed haunts on a journey of exploration. The short stretch of road with its pop-stands, gas-tanks, water-cans, hot dogs, ukeleles, kewpie dolls and chocolate almond bars to which you are accustomed, and of which you think as something local, is the broad and pulsing artery of a nation.

Perhaps you know the road. It begins almost anywhere, at a farmhouse called Ye Willow Inne, climbs a hill and runs off willingly between two rows of brightly painted numbers on its fences, trees and posts. It is the Dixie Highway, or the Lincoln Highway, or the Lackawanna Trail; it is the Yellowstone Trail, or the Yosemite Trail, or the Roosevelt Million Dollar Highway. It is a broad avenue, and with our national talent for organization we have plastered it with good advice. It is impossible to lose one's way and difficult to lose one's life.

Signboards, cross-bars, death's heads, red lights and alarm bells guard the approach to every

danger-spot and warn all travellers that locomotives run on railway tracks. The slightest deviation from the straightaway is forecast half a mile ahead. Hills have their lefts and rights. A white streak cuts the road in two, with a keep-to-your-own-side code protecting the ascending sheep from being fouled by the descending goats. There is every safeguard here which engineering can devise, every service which can be performed by free air-tanks and expert tire-changers, every dissuasion which can be brought to bear to keep travellers from self-destruction. This is the highway of a nation.

Over it travels, for many hours of the day, a vast company of motors. Up and down the well-protected hills, over crossroads carefully chalked for left-hand turns and past bits of roadside history done on billboards, the long procession picks its way. America is cruising. It is bumper to bumper, sometimes, for a mile—with no chance of interfering from the side-lines. Inside his gate a farmer pulls his team up short, and counts a string of seven cars before he sees a loophole in the traffic. The pace is steady, seldom-changing, just a little better than the law allows. Only rarely does the caravan slow down. Then horns toot and heads are thrust out nervously to look ahead.

Somewhere a slow-mover is holding up the line. He creeps along, deaf, dumb and blind; rebellion in his rear. More sirens blare; clutches shift; brakes bite. What is the matter up there, anyway? Somebody must be looking at the scenery! Doesn't that fellow know that if the rest of us don't get to Jamesport at 2.30 we won't reach Creston until after three?—and if we don't reach Creston until after three?—well, then we won't reach Smithtown by 3:45. . . . Not that there is anything special for us to do, at Smithtown.

One car slips by. Another car. A third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth. The pace picks up again.

§

When the Via Appia was still a highway to be bragged about and young Roman gentlemen sped from Venusia to Tarentum at fifteen millia an hour, arches stood along the road to mark the advancing frontiers of the Roman state. History was written here. For each arch marked a new outpost and a new foothold for Roman culture. We are not Romans, but we have marked our highways with appropriate symbols. What the arch was to Rome is the filling station to America.

For as the Romans built their highway step by step, first to Capua, then Beneventum, then

on to the very heel of Italy at Brundusium, so the march of the filling station across country marks the progress of a civilization which can live in new mobility, new comfort and new speed. Twenty years ago the filling station was unheard of. Fuel could be purchased only at garages in the towns. The iron siphon, gargling gasoline for its customers in a glass jar for a moment, before spewing it into the waiting motor through a rubber hose, had not yet been invented. These were the days when travel was a matter of luck and the tourist outward bound stoked up with gasoline and oil enough to carry him from one city to another. He could look for no relief along the road. Not to have thought about his gasoline ahead of time was to walk a mile and borrow of a farmer. We had not yet marked our Roman roads with arches.

The rise of the filling station is coincident with the standardization of America. The same successful methods of efficiency and comfort have swept across the country and the filling stations stand as symbols of their progress. Not by so much as three dents in the contour of its battered water-can does one station differ from another. Each is the product of a national art, perfected and unchanging. There is the low shelter with its gabled roof. There is the custodian in khaki trousers with a shirt open at the throat and an evident scorn for

anything which lacks eight cylinders. There are the two great pumps outside his door, precisely like all other pumps, at every other station: consistently of the same height, the same diameter, the same cheery shade of red. There is the half circle of cement driveway which makes an arc between these siphons from the road outside. At one end of this cement is painted in white letters, IN. At the other end is painted in white letters, OUT. Not once in years, in this conformist nation, does it occur to any traveller to mutiny at these designations and attempt the OUT end for his IN.

Here is a scene which can be reproduced in any corner of the country: people doing the same thing in the same way in vast numbers for the same purpose. It is not easy in any other place to observe so clearly that certain American customs have developed an uncompromising ritual. A car pulls up. There follows, in regular order, the disagreement between passengers in the front seat and passengers in the rear seat as to the brand of gasoline purchased at the last station, the dispute as to whether this new brand is the same or not the same, the corollary dispute as to whether it does or does not make the slightest difference, the descent from the car to stretch the legs, the salutation to the agent of the station,

the setting of the gauge, the turning of the crank, the shaking of the hose for whatever residue remains inside.

Blindfold a man, whisk him around the continent, set him down in an unknown city, and from watching its manners for an hour he might guess its name. But put him down in front of a filling station, any filling station, and not even a sixth sense could tell him whether he was one mile from the Boston Public Library or lost on the Dakota plains.

§

Listen to the conversation of two travellers who have pulled up at the siphons to buy oil. They are strangers: voyagers who have met by chance and will not meet again.

The first is eating a hot dog and waiting for his change. He looks at the customer on his left, and nods. "Heading for Freeport, neighbour?"

"Freeport? Yeh, soon as I get some gas," his neighbour says. He too is eating a hot dog while his son removes the wrapper from a box of cracker jack. "Road all right?"

"Road's fair. Sand, though."

"Sand, eh?"

"Yeh, lots of sand. But sand don't make any difference to *this* car."

"No? My car neither."

"My car is great on sand."

"Yeh? My car is a bear on sand."

"Hills, too."

"Hills? Say, this car of mine goes up hills like a pig shot out of a barrel. Why, coming up a hill back there a way I passed three cars——"

"I know. Same way with mine. Just have to touch the throttle——"

"And distance! Say, this car is a bird for distance. Never had her out in my life but I got twenty to the gallon."

"Yeh? This car of mine'll just about get that. Nearer twenty-two, I guess. And run? Say, runs like a locomotive. Haven't had the hood up in two years, I guess."

"No? Me neither. This car of mine—— Well, good luck and I'll have a look at that sand of yours. Here's my change."

Clutches grind. Off on the trail they go, one headed east, one headed west. What does it matter that five miles down the road both will have their coats off, bending over smoky motors? This is a modern, mechanistic age, but are men to have no chance to tell each other sagas?

As the first trail-blazers gathered around friendly fires in the wilderness, so men meet now at filling stations on the well-marked road: stopping to buy

gas, light pipes, counsel each other as to roads, trade warnings about speed traps and discourse solemnly of mileage, markets, taxes, Prohibition, Congress, Coolidge, cords and years without a puncture—pausing on the threshold of a new adventure long enough to tell great tales and boast great boasts.

The filling station is a rare spot, in a country of magnificent distances, for the cross-pollination of ideas.

§

Over the hills winds the caravan. No other people run around on wheels as we do. No other people live as large a part of their lives in transit as we do. There are motor cars abroad; but not a tenth as many in all Europe. There are touring clubs in France; there are treks from England into Scotland; but with us alone is it suddenly decided after supper to bring the family motor from its shed and take it of an evening for a run which would be thought a day's expedition, anywhere in Europe.

There is constantly in progress in America a migration beside which, from the point of view of numbers, the flight of the chosen people into Egypt was a disturbance of a minor order. A few thousand people crossed the Nile. Millions cross

the Mississippi. There are twenty-two million automobiles in the United States. Assume that at any given moment no more than a mere one per cent. of them is on the road. That still means two hundred and twenty thousand cars forever flitting from one filling station to another, with half a million people on their backs. Where are they going, why are they speeding, what do they hope to find?

Impressions? Yes. Impressions of a never-ending road, a thousand farms, grade-crossing signs, back axles, towns passed through at twenty miles an hour.

Thrills? Yes. Thrills of scenery worth stopping for if there were only time, of police on motorcycles masked as fellow-tourists, of gorgeous sunsets well worth watching if the top were down, of getting home, at last, without a crumpled fender.

Trophies? Yes. Trophies to bring back memories of this day of travel: postcards, toy balloons and paper bathing-girls; fresh eggs, fancy radiator caps and sea-shells with an echo.

Yet surely these are poor rewards for so much travel. Surely it is worth no man's while to drive three hundred miles from break of dawn on Sunday just to add another pennant to his string; or to scurry across country for the expressed purpose of viewing the scenery, without stopping any-

where except to change his tires; or to bring back from a point one hundred and eighty-three miles distant an impression of two dozen policemen and seven cities all alike; or to hurry half the day for the apparent purpose of arriving at a point far enough away to make it necessary to turn at once and hurry home again.

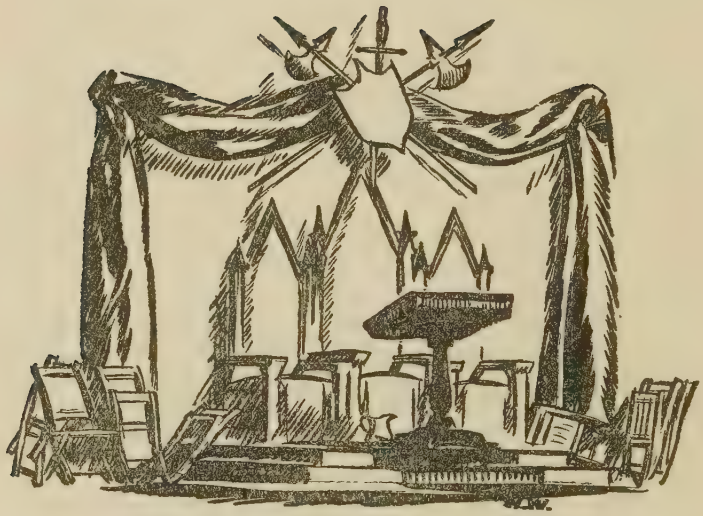
No rational explanation can suffice for wandering so purposeless. It is not a matter of reason. It is something in the blood. We are a young nation and the roving spirit is still robust in us. If we cannot rove for the purpose of settling a continent we shall at least rove for the fun of roving, for the pleasure of seeing something, or for the joy of merely having been.

§

Horns toot. Out on the road of pop-stands, gas tanks, water-cans, hot dogs, ukeleles, kewpie dolls and chocolate almond bars that is now the highway of a nation, one car slips past the slow-mover who is holding up the line. Another car. A third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth. The pace picks up again.

Twilight in September. Over the hills winds the caravan: looking for something, nothing, everything. Lunches gone, lights twinkling, tonneaus full of golden-rod, America re-visited.

SWEET LAND OF SECRECY



CHAPTER III

SWEET LAND OF SECRECY

CENTRE HALL is a blaze of lights. The curb is parked with motors. Lodge night ranks with the filling station as one of the great successes on the modern scene. For the growth of lodges is stupendous. There were sixty million people of adult age in the United States at the last census. There are, on the basis of trustworthy figures, eight hundred active secret orders with thirty million members. In 1928 half of us have a watch-charm and a countersign. We are the world's great joiners.

We join everything. We join the Gideons and the Rotarians and the Kiwanians and the Democrats and the Republicans and the Single Taxers and the Epworth Leaguers and the Friends of Self-Determination for Rhodesia, to say nothing of almost innumerable country clubs and luncheon clubs and motor clubs and discussion clubs and societies for the prevention of this and the prevention of that and the achievement of the other.

All this is above and beyond the thirty million.

The thirty million includes only members of bona-fide secret orders with a ritual. It includes members of vast organizations like the Woodmen and the Knights of Pythias and the Odd Fellows and the Daughters of Rebekah, each of which carries on its roster more than half a million members. It includes the Maccabees who meet in "Hives," the Red Men who meet in "Tribes," the Prophets who meet in "Grottos," the Watchmen who meet in "Forts," the Stags who meet in "Droves," the Owls who meet in "Nests" and the Eagles who meet in "Aeries." It includes those new and rapidly growing secret orders, the Beavers, Lions, Serpents, Roosters, Orioles, Deer, Geese, Goats and Bears. It includes organizations like the Moose, the Foresters, the Modern Order of White Mahatmas and the Concatenated Order of the Hoo-Hoo, the Sheiks of the Mosque, the Iridescent Order of Iris, the Benevolent Order of Monkeys and the Hooded Ladies of the Mystic Den.

Who really knows his country without at least one password?

§

A few of the many brightly named and highly varied orders which thrive upon these modern times are venerable and of long standing, but

most of them are new. Few date back to the Spanish War. Scores of the most successful ones have been thought up and created entirely within the last two decades. Some of them, like the Owls, the Eagles and the Deer, are the work of experienced organizers; others, like the Elks, get started almost accidentally. In recent years "Elkology" has been defined as something "by far more comprehensive than theology, since it not only contains the theory of a God but the new application of his existence"; but in humbler days "Elkology" was only the good-fellowship of a somewhat jolly benevolent society founded in New York in 1866 as a protest against the excise laws, and deriving its name from a moose head in Barnum's old museum, mistaken by the founders for an elk.

Necessarily the start is modest, and some of the new orders fail even before they have had time to launch a women's auxiliary, choose a patron animal or organize a drill team. Others survive, and prosper as they pick up members. "Drive" follows "drive." The Ladies of the Mystic Circle challenge the Knights of the Mystic Circle to a contest for new members. Rival organizations push their claims in the advertising pages of a countrywide fraternal press.

"Our ritual," says the Fraternal Order of

Beavers, "stacks up with any Order in existence—brief snappy opening ceremony, including beautiful Patriotic Flag exercises. . . . Special dramatic degree exemplifying the Beavers in the Valley of the Turquemenau and their conflict with the Iroquois."

Perhaps your fancy turns to other lines. "Our ritual," says the Ancient and Illustrious Order of the Knights of Malta, "is the sole repository of the rites and ceremonies practised during the Middle Ages, preserved in their entirety but presented in more exquisite style by the aid of modern invention."

The choice is varied. It is the boast of Melter, one of the orders of the Supreme Tribe of Ben Hur, that "here is the funniest side degree known to fraternalism" and the claim of the Eastern Order of Magian Masters that its charter comes from "chosen messengers of the Holy Ghost."

The drive goes over. The funniest side degree known to fraternalism or the sole repository of the rites and ceremonies practised during the Middle Ages catches on. Members come in by the thousand. The new order is a success; but there remain two hazards.

The first is imitation: an immediate stampede into the field of a host of new societies all patterned on the model of the latest winner. The second is

the familiar hazard which has beset every successful institution in the history of human effort, whether the institution was a secret order, a church, a political party or a school of poets: namely, schism.

Jealousies arise, factions appear, it is alleged that the majority is not abiding by tradition, that the clique in control of the Woodmen or the Orioles is not interpreting Woodmanism or Oriology in the spirit of its founders. Friction grows. A conflict follows. One wing of the Order of Owls quarrels with the other (1912), and from the controversy springs full-fledged the Order of Ancient Oaks. This is secession. In the case of the Owls it has happened twenty times since 1906. It is happening constantly in most fraternal organizations. Sometimes it results in the destruction of the parent order. Sometimes the parent order snuffs life from its upstart rival. But note this:

Never has the net effect been to destroy fraternalism itself, or to check its growth, or to reduce its numbers. Schisms may come and schisms may go, but the gate still swings to the double knock and the whispered pass-word. Into a nation overrun with secret fraternal orders come each year new secret fraternal orders which somehow live and prosper. Mere fear of crowding does

not faze them. The Elks are followed by the Moose, the Moose are followed by the Stags, the Stags are followed by the Buffalos, the Buffalos are followed by the Deer, the Deer are followed by the Reindeer; it is almost demonstrably true, and not a mere conceit of the imagination, that within a decade we shall have the Caribou and then the Musk-Ox.

Each year the procession lengthens. The apparent fact that this America of ours is already super-organized with bucks and birds and knights and seers is only an incentive. On they come: new orders stumbling over themselves into a world in which there is ostensibly not the slightest room for them, yet finding room and settling down and waxing great and adding millions to their rosters. We have reached a stage, in point of numbers, when half the adult population of America now owns a fez, a scimitar, a secret code, two feet of plume, a cutlass or a pair of Anatolian breeches.

There is nothing like it elsewhere in all Christendom.

What explains it?

§

A modern economist might have a ready explanation.

All of this, he might say, is simply a somewhat

colorful demonstration of the fact that men organize willingly for economic motives. In this case, whatever they think of the swords they swing and the plumes they wear and the horns they blow, they are really organizing chiefly for two purposes: first, to participate in the advantages of the group insurance plans which are characteristic of most lodges, and second, to make friends and bring in business.

No doubt there is truth here. Insurance benefits are an integral part of most secret orders and not infrequently the point they chiefly stress. Especially is this true in the case of new orders which have still to make a name. Thus the Loyal Order of Buffalos, "a great big, broad-minded, non-sectarian, fraternal, sociable and charitable secret society," points out that it provides death benefits, accident benefits, sickness benefits, disability benefits, insurance bureaus and the free services of a family physician—"all for $6 charter fee and 75 cents a month."

Nor is there any doubt, so far as the other major economic factor is concerned, that a large part of the joining done in this country is done for the purpose of acquiring brothers who will not only take the everlasting oath but also open cash accounts. In one of the last public addresses of President Harding, himself an Elk, a Moose, a

Mason, a Shriner and a tall Cedar of Lebanon, there occurs a story of two gentlemen who came to Marion, Ohio, and joined the two fraternities "with the largest memberships" solely for purposes of commerce. Probably there are few localities which lack instances of this careful choosing.

But when this much is said, and when it is admitted that fraternal orders have their business side, it is apparent that there is still a good deal of ground which this explanation of their popularity does not cover. For it does not explain why men who wish to enjoy insurance benefits do not organize economically for that purpose without going to the bother and expense of dressing themselves as Algerian zouaves each time they meet. It does not explain why men who wish to attract customers to the stores they run should find pleasure in memorizing long passages of archaic ritual and challenging their neighbours with a halberd.

After all, there are almost countless social clubs and insurance societies where men and women can make business contacts and protect themselves against the losses of ill health. American fraternalism is something more than this. The economic interpretation is all right as far as it goes, but American fraternalism is something

more than a chance to make money or to save it. It is the gateway to a never-never land.

§

Here is John Jones, a plain bank-teller of 211 E. Fourth Street, almost anywhere. But here also is John Jones, on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 11, a Sir Knight Errant of the Mystic Order of Granada. It is characteristic of secret orders that the names they bear are high-spirited and resounding, on a plane above the routine affairs of daily living. The Shriners are not simply Shriners; they are members of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. The Grottos are not simply Grottos; they are members of the Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm.

There are many other "Mystic" orders. There are many "Illustrious" orders, many "Imperial" orders, many "Exalted" orders. Frequently there are orders which are several of these at once. On the heels of the Illustrious and Exalted Order of Crusaders comes the Imperial and Illustrious Order of the Mystic and Exalted Cross. These are good objectives, and possibly by this time some five million Americans have identified themselves with at least one of them. Possibly five million more Americans have identified themselves with

two other adjectives which prefix the names of at least fifty thriving orders. These two are "Royal" and "Ancient"; and the popularity of each is understandable in a nation which has neither royalty nor antiquity, but a vicarious enthusiasm for them both.

To live in a modern world and be an ancient; to live in a humdrum world and be a knight; to live in a gabby world and have a secret—all this is possible. It is the essence of fraternalism that it does its best to make it possible. An illustrious name is only a beginning. When the password is given and the inner door swings back, it is upon a world as different from the world outside as ingenuity can make it.

No mere Presiding Officer sits upon the dais; we live in a democracy, but if there is one important secret order which has chosen to pattern itself on the Republic, and call its presiding officer a President, the name of that society is not on record. On the dais sits a Monarch or a Master, a Supreme Seignior, an Illustrious Potentate, a Grand Illuminator or a Maharajah. No secretary is a secretary in this world of dreams come true: he is a Thrice Illustrious Scribe. No treasurer is a treasurer: he is an August Keeper of the Strong-Box. No citizen is a citizen: he is a knight, a monk, a priest, a dervish or an ogre.

Never mind if the light is bad and the toga needs a safety-pin; whose hands have never trembled as he tied a mask behind his ears or combed the fine gold fringe of a glossy pair of epaulettes or stuck in his hat the splendid plume that made of him a Don Quixote? Lodge night for the Red Men brings out the tomahawks. Lodge night for the Shriners brings out the fezes. Lodge night for the Odd Fellows, when the Third Encampment meets, brings out the purple gowns, the yellow belts, the mitres and the breast-plates. All over America, six nights a week, from one to five million men and women are dressing themselves as brahmins, pharaohs, Vikings, princes, furies, hermits, druids, Galahads, sorcerers, Maltese and Tibetans.

For what purpose?

If I tell, swears the Woodman, "may I be dashed to pieces as I now dash this fragile vessel into fragments!"

If I tell, swears the Maccabee, "may my left arm be cut off above the elbow!"

If I tell, swears the Shriner, "may my eyeballs be pierced to the centre with a three-edged blade, my feet be flayed, and I be forced to walk the hot sands upon the sterile shores of the Red Sea until the flaming sun shall strike me with living plague, and may Allah, the god of Arab, Moslem and

DOMINICAN COLLEGE SAN RAFAEL

Mohammedan, the god of my fathers, support me to the entire fulfillment of the same, Amen, Amen, Amen."

§

"Raise the right hand on a level with the face, the last two fingers closed, the two forefingers extended, slightly apart, the thumb resting on the third finger, back of the hand to the front, signifying 'Who are you?'—Answer: The same sign with the left hand, meaning 'Friend.'"

Thus do the good ladies of the Degree of Pocahontas greet each other "In Distress." And no one contemplating the thought of a lodgeful of ladies raising right and left hands alternately to signal Who are you? and receive the answer Friend, can doubt that into the routine business of grocery errands, carpet-sweepers, pillow-slips, literary clubs and laundry lists American fraternalism has brought something agreeably and generically different.

This is notoriously a new world, and in it many things are done prosaically and not a great deal is done glamorously. Possibly there never was a time when many things really were done glamorously. But at least we picture such a time, and embellish it with open roads and heroes who were pioneers and frontiersmen making merry in a world that had no time-clocks. In some such

world is cast much of our folklore and most of our early fiction. We may be forgiven if we look back to it occasionally from this other world in which we live: a very modern American world of mass production, uptown locals, carbon copies, 5:16's, yours received and contents noted, references, cross-references and headlines.

Do not smile if the Foresters of America, a quarter of a million strong, meet once a week to reaffirm their faith and in the secrecy of an oath-bound lodge enact a ritual "which touches upon the adventures of Robin Hood and brings in Biblical events relative to the Garden of Eden." A wind whistles through Sherwood Forest which has been baked dry in steam-heated offices with dictaphones and rustless fly-screens.

Do not smile if once a month the Red Men gather at the stake and (Ritual p. 30) the Junior Sagamore cries, "Warriors, prepare for the execution! Braves, make ready and pile high the fagots!" Man cannot live on bread alone—or on a diet of index files and office routine.

Regularly, once a week, from one end of a broad country to the other, the Knights of Pythias meet to reënact the fable of Damon and his faithful friend, the Yeomen to play Ivanhoe, the Odd Fellows to offer some new Isaac in expiation for his brothers' sins. Tell draws his bow once more;

Cæsar spurns his crown; in a new world Lancelot and Miles Standish, Charlemagne and Barbara Frietchie, Hector and Pocahontas live again.

§

Lodge night in a thousand towns and cities: Centre Hall a blaze of lights, its chandeliers festooned with paper bunting. Guards at the gates—a blowsy veil at the mystic shrine—crossed flags above the booming organ—row on row of folding-chairs, wax-yellow, cushionless, but upholstered with rich memories.

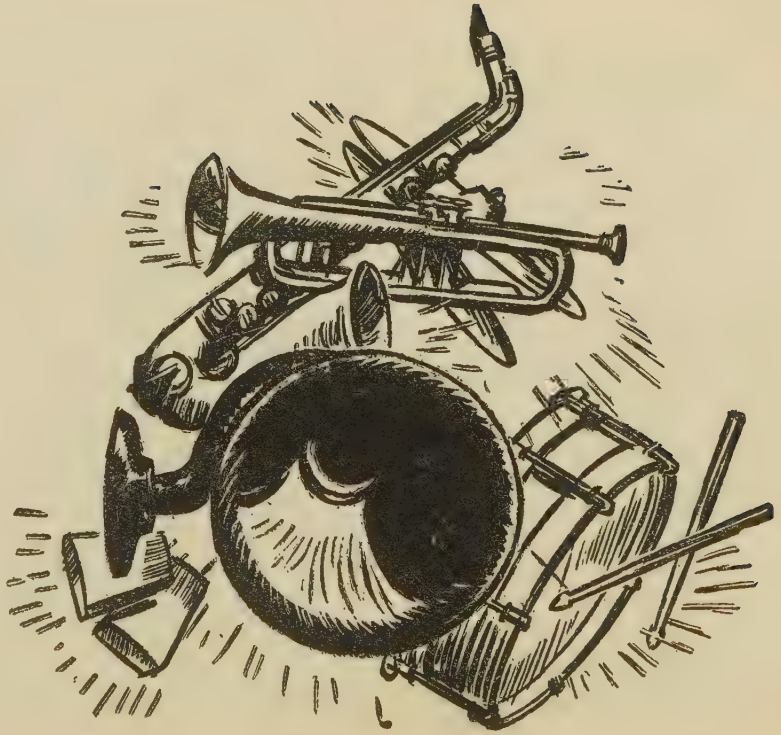
From the street outside you climb a flight of well-worn stairs to the second landing. There is a door of varnished oak, behind which stands the Lord High Seneschal. It is just an average door; but beyond lies mystery, drama, opportunity to share great names and take a hand in deeds well done, the satisfaction of "belonging."

You knock three times; pause for a heart beat; knock three times again. . . . The panel opens wide enough to disclose a lawn tie and two waistcoat buttons. . . . "Advance, stranger, and give the countersign!"

A whispered word. . . . The door swings slowly on its hinges.

It will continue to swing as long as life is drab enough for grown men to play Indian.

TOM-TOM



CHAPTER IV

TOM-TOM

GOOD evening, ladies and gentlemen of the radio family. This is Station WKD, broadcasting from Albany, New York. I am sure those of you who have just heard Dr. Doolittle's interesting talk on the Double-Entry System will be glad to know that we have with us to-night the Griswold Troubadours, presented with the compliments of Griswold and Company, manufacturers of leather belting. Our troubadours are now gliding under a Venetian moon to the palace of the duke, where the young lover will serenade the lady of his dreams. In keeping with this scene, the young lover will sing 'Mong Cur Ah Swaff Poor Voo,' after which the Hotsey Totsey Boys will play 'I Got the Gimme's, So Gimme Another One Too.'"

§

There is no need to waste superlatives on the radio. It belongs with lodge night and the filling station as one of our modern favourites and its

progress to popularity has been rapid. Who does not know that from a few thousand experimental sets in 1917 the number of sets has jumped to seven million in a decade? Who does not know that from a single station broadcasting programs in 1920 the number of stations had leaped so prodigiously near a thousand by 1927 that Congress was called upon to strike a large number of them dumb by legislation? Who does not know that far from having to search the air for stations nowadays, stations come crowding in of their own accord in such profusion that the practice of having one "silent night" a week has been thought up in Chicago?

Great things have happened to the radio in a remarkably short time. It is only eight years since the first grand opera star trilled a few notes condescendingly into a microphone; now there is no opera star who has not fought Dr. Cadman for a wave-length. It is only eight years since the first church services were broadcast from Calvary Church in Pittsburgh; now the air is filled with sermons every Sunday morning. It is only eight years since Congresswoman-elect Alice M. Robertson of Oklahoma was persuaded to say a few words at the first hotel banquet broadcast by KDKA; now no President—no up-to-date Vice President—would think of shaking hands with a

farmer from the corn belt without making certain of his hook-ups.

Radio is a gigantic industry developed with unprecedented speed. Millions of amplifiers, B-batteries, cone-speakers and interference eliminators have been sold to an apparently inexhaustible market in a few short years. Millions of people who like to talk have suddenly been content to listen. Millions of arias, exhortations, perorations, amens, ha-has, and goodnightalls have been launched into the untiring ether. The call to arms, the plea for peace, the cry for help, the pop of the cork, the bleat of the lamb and the roar of the tiger in the zoo have all had their turn on the loud-speaker. It is said of the radio that there is no feat in the transmission of sound too difficult for it to manage: that it can take the heart-beats of a house-fly, magnify them till they roar like Lewis guns and send them to New Zealand.

No doubt this is true. But it is the least of the achievements claimed for the radio by its army of enthusiasts. Here is a new instrument with which to broadcast science, literature and art, and bring the distant, complex problems of government home to the man in the street. "Radio is the great unifier and educator of the whole American people," says Mr. O. H. Caldwell of the Radio

Commission. "Professors and scholars are agreed," says a recent article in the New York *Herald-Tribune*, "that the radio has deeply affected not only the life but the thought of the nation. The wireless even creates new systems of philosophy."

§

Faithfully at 6:45 each evening, as WKD goes on the air, George Wilder sits down to his modern six-tube set and spins the dial. George Wilder is a business man in Syracuse. He is neither an old-timer nor a newcomer as a listener-in. He bought his first set as long ago as 1924. But this was after the neutrodyne craze had swept the country and long after the palmy days of the old three-circuit regenerator, when honeycomb and spiderweb windings were the rage. George Wilder bought into the radio family when it had advanced beyond these early stages: when its mechanics were no longer experimental and its architecture was already Florentine.

There is no static on George Wilder's set. There are no harsh discordances to be tuned out and no grating blurs like the faint tap of distant baking-powder tins to distract attention from the program. The voice that comes in is crystal-clear. It is coming in now from WKD, and out of the

ether it speaks suddenly and genially as George Wilder interrupts it in full flight:

". . . only makes it harder. Few of us, I assure you, really like such work, but it can be made a quick and not unpleasant task if the dishes are first scraped—it is important to scrape the dishes first—and then assembled, and if there is plenty of hot water, good mild soap that will not hurt the hands and plenty of fresh dish-towels. If, on the other hand, there is not plenty of hot water, good mild soap that will not hurt the hands and plenty of fresh dish-towels—"

WKD runs off downhill as George Wilder turns the dial. From a point two inches farther to the right a new but no less genial voice picks up the telling of another story:

". . . thus leaving the two lovers on the stage alone. In words which you are now about to hear—"

George Wilder does not wait to hear, but pushes on to KRA; catches Dr. Godfrey Willis in the middle of a lecture, "Are We Really Educated?"; drops him; pushes on to WKB; hears a distant strain of music; coddles it gently to weed it from a lecture on "Our Boys at Annapolis"; discovers it is a soprano; drops it; pushes on to WJA; picks up the Secretary of Agriculture addressing the annual meeting of the National Grange; learns that the common barberry bush, which carries the black stem rust of wheat, is being successfully eradicated in eleven of the upper Mississippi

states but that new difficulties have been encountered due to the discovery of considerable areas of wild barberries in unexpected places; hovers in the neighbourhood of the wild barberry bush to see if the Ukelele Boys are broadcasting from St. Louis; finds that the Ukelele Boys are silent; comes back home to see what WKD is doing now; and hears:

". . . buttered onions. Fluffy mashed potato arranged in a ring, with boiled tongue, sliced and arranged on boiled spinach—"

No. The same party, George Wilder mutters, is still at it. Well, there is WLO; but WLO does not come on till ten o'clock on Tuesday evenings. There is KFA; but bitter experience has taught George Wilder that if it isn't the boll weevil at KFA on Tuesday evenings it is Bach. There is WDW in Chicago. The dial moves on again, and stops.

". . . ty-eight. Wheat, May, one hundred and thirty-seven and one quarter, high, one hundred and thirty-sev—"

Hello! Right on the edge of that thirty-seven there is something stirring. George Wilder leans one elbow on the cabinet and tinkers with the dial. Here it comes. A sudden friendly burst of music of the sort that can be whistled. George Wilder turns the dial a little more this way; a little more

that way; no, better the way it was before. Now the saxophone, instead of sounding as if it were playing right in the next room, sounds as if it were playing right in the same room and in the middle of the table.

This is a real orchestra, playing a real tune. Must be either the Jollity Boys from the Crystal Palace or the Gaiety Boys from the Midnight Club or the Hilarity Boys from the National Zinc and Iron. George Wilder tries the dial a hair's-breadth farther to the left, a hair's-breadth farther to the right, two hairs'-breadths back again. Then, satisfied that the volume of sound is fairly constant and as loud as possible, he lights a cigar and reaches for the evening paper.

This is the rite of tuning in.

§

WKD has long since finished with its cooking hour. It is half past ten. The lights are low. The evening's guests have come and gone. But from the parlor of the Wilder home still comes the steady blare of a dance tune played by an orchestra as fresh as ever. When the Jollity Boys gave out, the Jubilee Club jumped in, to be succeeded by the National Cookie Company Song-Birds.

This is an average radio evening in one American home, and no doubt in others too. True,

there are the great occasions; and when the President of the United States or the Queen of Rumania goes on the air we are accustomed to hearing it said that from twenty to thirty million people listen in. But there are several types of listeners-in. There are the whole-time listeners-in who religiously hear the whole thing through, without once yielding to the temptation of trying something else, and the part-time listeners-in who steal off regularly at about the fourteenth paragraph, having learned that America is a wonderful country or that the federal budget for 1927 was $3,998,027,396, whereas for 1926 it was something else, and try their luck at some less pretentious station where a band is playing.

Happily, a band is always playing somewhere. For the radio has produced an avalanche of bands. This is a musical age, and we have come a long way from the days when Sousa's Band and Pryor's Band were the only bands in the country with a national reputation. There are literally hundreds of bands, jazz orchestras and syncopated entertainers whose fame the radio has broadcast into millions of homes reaching all the way from city flats to the loneliest farms in the wheat country: Roxy and His Gang, the Marimba Band, the Anglo-Persians, the South Sea Islanders, the Clicquot Club Eskimos, the Butter and

Egg Boys, the Radiotrons, the Ipana Troubadours, the Silvertown Orchestra, the Humming Birds, the Banjo Buddies, the Apple Knockers, the A. & P. Gypsies, Ayers' Soda Music Makers, Roemer's Homers, Mua's Paradise Hawaiians, the Whiting's Milk Milkmen, the Happiness Boys, the Snappiness Boys, and scores of others.

It is the brass bands, the popular airs, the harmony boys and the ukeleles that have made the radio famous. And it is to the brass bands, the popular airs, the harmony boys and the ukeleles that the radio gives most of its treasured time.

Ten of the typical smaller stations—WHO, Des Moines; WFI, Philadelphia; WHN, New York; WSM, Nashville; WTIC, Hartford; WBAL, Baltimore; WSAI, Cincinnati; WMAQ, Chicago; WDAF, Kansas City and WFAA, Dallas—were on the air for 294 hours in a recent week. They did not waste much of this time being educational. They gave 28 hours to "talks," 77 hours to serious and partway serious music, and 189 hours to syncopation.

Ten of the larger stations—WEAF, New York; WJZ, New York; WGY, Schenectady; KDKA, Pittsburgh; WGN, Chicago; WLW, Cincinnati; WOC, Davenport; WWJ, Detroit; WBZ, Springfield and WCCO, Minneapolis—were on the air for 357 hours in the same week; used 56 of these hours

for talks, 42 for serious music and 259 for harmony and rhythm. Even at these larger stations, where the task of enlightening a vast public upon matters of cultural value rests more heavily on the conscience of the radio, the proportion is four hours of popular airs to one of education.

Nor is this all. The predominance which jazz enjoys is even more impressive than these figures show. For at all the larger stations the usual procedure is to get the serious part of the program done with, fairly early in the day, so as to have the evening free for sheer enjoyment. It is during the daytime hours, when listeners-in are relatively scarce, that most of the talks on teeth, the discussions of the Dawes plan, the courses in French and the violin solos take the air—and during the evening hours, when millions of people are listening in, that the friendly jazz-bands blare.

Search the programs of KDKA, WGY and WJZ for an average week, and how many talks will you find on the schedule after seven in the evening? Seldom more than one an evening for each station, seldom lasting more than thirty minutes. As against this total, count an average of at least two hours of jazz, played in relays by at least five sets of entertainers.

This much seems sure: however marvellous the mechanics of the radio, however unlimited its

future and however splendid its chance of becoming in due course of time a great national talking-machine from which an enraptured public will extract sheer disembodied knowledge, its chief function for the moment is more limited, more easily realized and much more entertaining.

The saxophones begin at seven.

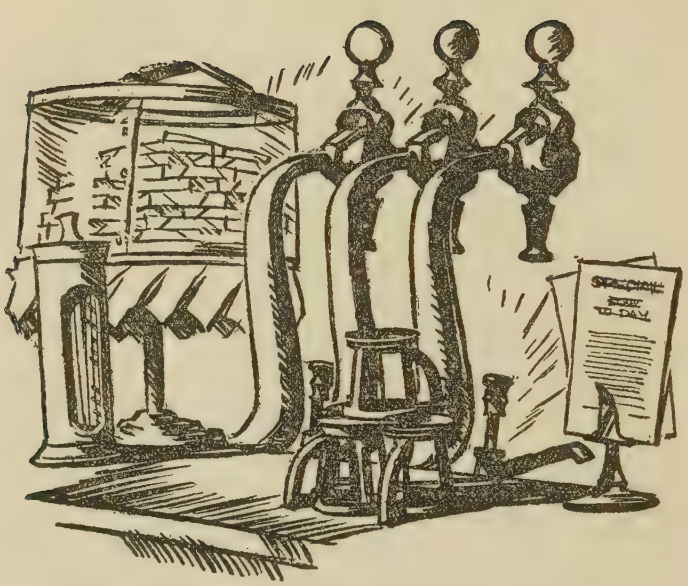
§

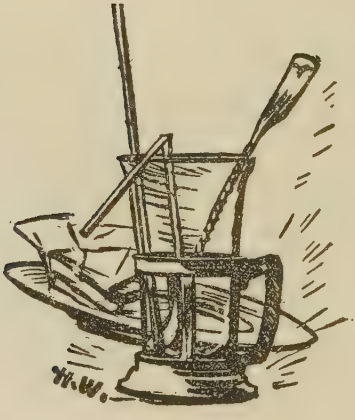
If it is on harmony and rhythm that the radio puts its emphasis, rather than on its little sallies into national budgets, its ten-minute lectures on the genesis and evolution of the Dawes plan and its tonight-let-us-spend-five-minutes-with-the-poets, there is nothing strange about the fact and certainly nothing reprehensible. If even the biggest stations give four times as many hours to syncopation as they give to science, drama, literature, art and history, there is nothing deplorable about the fact. For, after all, there are plenty of ways in which to study science, drama, literature, art and history, aside from listening in on short snatches of lectures which may begin somewhere in the middle and end by being interrupted by a band. The radio ought not to be criticized if it fails to take over the functions of laboratories, books, and art museums. They are out of its line. It has a function of its own.

This function is tympanic. Into a nation that lives at top speed most of the day and comes home much too wide-awake to settle down, the radio brings a stimulus for tired nerves and something to distract us from the dull business of staying put at home. We tune in, and let it play while we wash the dishes, read the evening's news, or entertain a neighbour on the porch. We tune in—on a mighty rhythm to which millions of people are marking time, the pulse-beat of a nation. All over the country the trombones blare and the banjos whang and the clarinets pipe the rhythm. All over the country the same new tunes that will be generations old before the week is out are hammered home at the same vast audience from a hundred different places. Oom-pah-pah, oom-pah-pah, I got the blue-hoo-hoos, I got the blue-hoo-hoos, I got the ooom-pah-pah, the oom-pah-pah. . . . If it is true that from twenty to thirty million Americans are listening in on the radio every evening, then for a large part of that evening they are listening in on the greatest single sweep of synchronized and syncopated rhythm that human ingenuity has yet conceived.

This is our counterpart of the drum the black man beats when the night is dark and the jungle lonely. Tom-tom.

THE NEW AMERICAN BAR





CHAPTER V

THE NEW AMERICAN BAR

ONE half billion dollars' worth of soda water washes its way annually into the great American stomach. This figure comes from statisticians of the drug trade, who point out that it would pay the American debt of the French Republic for the next ten years. What would happen if further provision were made for all the pimiento-and-cream-cheese sandwiches, all the Bartlett pear and orange salads, all the strawberry parfaits and all the hot fudge sundaes which all this soda water washes with it, must be left to the imagination. A new drug store has developed suddenly. Ladies and gentlemen, the national bar of the United States!

Step right in—the bar is at the right. It is no ordinary bar. It is not mere oak or birch, like bars which served an older trade now in disgrace. It gleams with polished marble. Slight flecks too perfectly arranged to be the work of nature dot its creamy yellow flanks. At one end sits a coffee urn; a keg of root beer guards the other.

The keg, let it be confessed, is a hollow swindle, since it holds nothing save the coiled apparatus of an ammonia freezer and the beer itself comes through a pipe dropped to the basement. Never mind. Nature herself and nature's works are amply represented by the pyramids of snow-white eggs at intervals along the counter, by the mounds of Jackie Coogan salted peanuts in their stately jars, by the drowsy flies which hover lazily above the crushed fruit in the covered cut-glass dishes. There is a nest of forks, two salts and peppers, a sugar bowl with a well-flavoured spoon. Straws come in pairs, two sealed hygienically within each paper packet; it has been ten years since any first-class merchant dealt them singly. From the sanitary confines of a square glass case six slices of mince pie leer out, the thin crust of their upper lips curled slightly.

This is the bar. Behind it rises the back-bar, an array of mirrors, stained-glass panels and carved fretwork. "Remember," writes Mr. Stuart Peabody in the *Northwestern Druggist*, "that more than any other department of the drug store the fountain represents *you*—your individuality, your taste and your good judgment." There are many ways of piling glasses, pinning paper streamers onto polar fans, draping chains of paper daisies and displaying signs which advertise the special

dishes of the day.—"Hungry? We suggest Egg Phosphate and Fruit Salad."—"Thirsty? Try Our Cherry Split."—"Good Morning, How About a Glass of Zoolack?"

The young clerk at the counter takes stock of his sandwiches and shakes his head.

"All out of white. Have rye? One rye, one malted milk."

He strikes his palm on the nickel-plated spigot which pumps chocolate. It snorts, coughs once or twice, hiccoughs apologetically, and spurts its stream of syrup warily into the waiting glass. A dash of powder; a dash of milk; here human effort ceases and a motor-driven mixer does the rest.

Yet do not think, even in these days when applied mechanics does the churning, and clerks no longer shake from bosom to the chin in short staccato beats until the metal shaker is a frosted white, that all individuality has departed from the art of mixing. The real artist lets his stream of syrup hit the side and not the bottom of his glass. He puts his ice cream in between two streams of fizz, and neither first nor last. Above all else, he has "the touch." And as an advertisement of the Knight Soda Fountain Company in the drug store press points out:

"Piano keys are not more important to Paderewski than the pumps of a fountain to the dispenser.

Always going. On them the dispenser composes his sweetest melodies. They must not fail."

They must not fail. They do not fail. We drink half a billion dollars' worth of their production annually.

§

This is the new American bar, and it is in part the product of good advertising, in part the child of Prohibition, in part the natural sequence of a "servant problem" which makes meals at home more troublesome, while men work farther from their homes and women work in offices.

The change is unmistakable. Even the man whose routine takes him into a drug store only to buy a toothbrush or to have a cinder taken from his eye cannot fail to note the difference. The corner where the fountain plays is the busiest corner of the store. It is always crowded at rush hours. Its development is too recent and too striking not to count with the radio, lodge night and the filling station as one of the real achievements of our modern times. There have always been soda fountains, and there have always been druggists here and there who functioned as caterers as well as pharmacists. But not until the last few years have there been thirty thousand of them. And not until the last few years has the soda fountain turned

from mere sliced ham to hearts of lettuce and begun to put on airs.

The drug store bar has developed with amazing speed because the druggists were prepared for it. The druggists were prepared for anything. Long before the swift development of this latest enterprise the druggists had learned open-mindedness. They had seen their profession branch out far beyond its old, time-honoured business of prescriptions. Drug stores were selling merchandise. They were not only selling merchandise of a type which seemed appropriate to the business of a pharmacist—soaps, perfumes, hair-dyes, atomizers, eye-cups and thermometers: they were selling cameras, cigars, books, playing cards, stationery, teapots, phonograph needles, handkerchiefs, pepper shakers, goggles, clocks, chafing-dishes, fountain-pens, pearl chokers, bridge lamps and electric stoves. From all of this to tuna fish and apple pie is no great transition.

A new opportunity beckoned suddenly. The druggists have made the most of it. The ordinary routine now is to start the morning with a "Business Breakfast." This is followed by a fresh sheaf of paper napkins and a service catering especially to "11 O'Clock Folks." Next comes "Business Luncheon." Then "Time for Tea." After this, "Summer or Winter Supper." The day winds up

with "Snacks after the Play." It is an all-day service with two shifts at work behind the counter, and even in the smaller stores in the smaller towns the menu is a long one. In the larger stores the alternatives are endless. They begin, in sandwiches, with commoner varieties like chopped ham, roast beef, cheese and pickle, and run on to combinations as elaborate as celery and gherkin, chicken livers and grilled bacon, salmon salad and chopped egg. Asparagus tips are not too fancy for these more ambitious stores. The epicure can dine on Yankee pot roast, fresh shrimps with Thousand Island dressing or Fish Cake Surprise. Pies run the gamut from the simple loganberry to the more sophisticated almond. As for drinks—

§

No one will take the full measure of these new bars if he regards them merely as convenient spots in which to snatch a bite of luncheon in a hurry. They are more than that. In an age of bustle, rush and ragged nerves, they are re-fuelling places for a jaded nation. Here, after a hard day, or a hard night, is a handy first aid station and a pick-me-up.

The front door swings to the push of a customer in middle years who comes to the bar with the assurance of one who has been here many times

before. He does not wink at the young gentleman with the smooth blond hair who stands behind the counter. He merely suggests. "Harry, make mine the same as yesterday." And Harry, when he has topped with two swift dabs of cream the marshmallow fudge pecan sundaes which are to sustain life till sundown in the two young stenographers at the far end of the counter, will pour for this new customer a "bracer." The favourite prescription is an ounce or two of pop and a good strong shot of whisky.

Not everywhere. Harry does not work at every drug store bar, nor is there a dark unlabelled flagon that comes to the counter willingly with every invitation. The number of Americans who have attempted unsuccessfully to wink their way to an alcoholic drink at a drug store bar since 1920 runs into many figures. That a wink will work is simply fiction.

Yet something works; for the sale of alcohol goes on despite the disapproval of responsible druggists and despite the difficulty of finding the right Harry. The druggists themselves admit it. It is necessary to make no charges which they have not made against themselves. Writing in *Drug Topics*, a national trade weekly, Mr. Kinnard Woolworth says "for every legitimate liquor prescription, a hundred illegitimate ones are being filled." At

many stores where the customer is personally known, "no prescriptions at all are necessary." Thousands of ex-bartenders who have entered the drug store business since the dawn of the Prohibition era "have had their Government permits revoked, but go right on bootlegging liquor without any permits—liquor purchased from bootleggers to be bootlegged."

"In the city of New York alone," says Mr. Woolworth, "two hundred thousand complaints have been received in the last year by the Police Department, many of them giving the names of drug stores. In Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and elsewhere, it is the same old story."

§

Presumably there is no responsible druggist who does not deplore this sale of alcohol across the counter, this confounding of the innocence of beet and lettuce salad at the new American bar with a persistent effort to defraud the law. At the same time there are probably few reputable druggists who do not carry on their shelves some thoroughly legal "bracer" with a good stout kick. Not all alcohol is alcohol. Some of it is patent medicine. Some of it is hair tonic. Some of it is plain canned heat.

How many purely alcoholic patent medicines in brightly labelled bottles now dot the shelves of

the drug stores of this country, no one knows. Names and formulas are changing constantly. The American Medical Association cites a list of two hundred and thirty-five such preparations. There are "bitters" whose alcoholic content is slightly more than double the alcoholic content of champagne, "tonics" which not only cure the stomach but warm it with an old-time flavour, "bracers" whose labels frankly announce them to contain "20 Per Cent. Alcohol," in these days when legislative committees are solemnly debating whether beer which is three and a half or three and three-quarters per cent. alcohol is or is not intoxicating. Appealing to a wide public through a vast quantity of newspaper advertising, a variety of these products are sold as heart cures, cold cures, lung cures, leg cures: enough pepsin or gentian or olive oil having been doctored into them to enable them to pass muster as "medicinal."

This is one way to get a drink in a dry country. There are other ways. For not all men are satisfied with a medicinal equivalent for mere port or sherry. They want something stronger, and find it in bay rum, toilet waters and Jamaica ginger. It is no uncommon incident when a Federal Judge for the Southern District of Ohio orders condemned and forfeited to the Government three barrels of dandruff cure, eight barrels of hair

tonic and five barrels of benzoin lotion seized by Prohibition agents as suspiciously prepared and intended for other purposes than mere medication of the scalp. We are living in a new dispensation, and hair tonic has become a subject of litigation in the courts, eau de cologne a problem for the state police. Even canned heat now serves as a base for home-made cocktails. The thirsty strain it through their handkerchiefs, distilling the alcohol from its residue of wax.

The result is less tasty than Old Dr. Gilpin's Liver and Stomach Bitters, but more effective in a pinch.

§

Dr. Gilpin is symbolic. For there is something characteristic of the whole setting of the modern drug store bar in these highly medicated compounds sold across the counter, something amiable but as unreal in its pretensions as the stomach cure that makes a cordial.

The thing begins with the bar itself. No doubt that gleaming yellow front is the best synthetic marble on the market. But is there any reason, really, for not regarding it as bogus? From the bevelled mirrors at its back to the supererogatory foot-rail at its base it is built in imitation of an older, tougher bar that was serving ale in Canter-

bury long before the first chocolate almond peppermint walnut sundae was invented. The jolly keg of cooling beer, with its contents of sixteen feet of copper pipe, is bogus. The paper poppies drooping from the artificial candle lights are bogus. The carefully piled pyramids of oranges on the shelves behind the bar are rubber oranges which bounce.

The food is bogus. It is frequently good food, no doubt, well cooked, well served, and wrapped in strictly sanitary packages. Granted. But it is bogus, none the less. What is it doing here, in a world of bunion plasters and prophylactic toothpastes? This is no place to serve food. No one conjuring up an even partway ideal state of human affairs would serve food in a background of hot water bottles. It is served here not because it belongs here but because it is a pale survival, promptly appropriated by the drug stores in a post-Prohibition era, of the old Free Lunch. The help-yourself cheese and the pretzels in figure-8's and the communal bowl of thumb-marked crackers are no more. They died with the old order. But the tradition of food served at a bar lived on, to blossom presently into a thousand fancy sandwiches and a thousand fancy drinks.

Time was when the soda fountain dealt straightforwardly in chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, raspberry, cherry, pineapple, maple, lemon, lime and

orange—with root beer, gingerale, Moxie and Coca Cola as its more sophisticated side lines. One had a plain vanilla soda with chocolate ice cream, or one had a plain chocolate soda with vanilla ice cream, or if one was young perhaps one had strawberry ice cream with raspberry flavour. That day is past. The old favourites still survive, but in a flood of "rickeys," "juleps," "egg-nogs," "fizzes," "freezes," and "frappés" they are hopelessly outnumbered.

Nothing illustrates the pretensions of the drug store bar more plainly than the soft drinks which flow across its counter: the half billion dollars' worth of soft drinks which, after all is said, are its chief stock in trade.—"What'll it be, boys?"—"Aw, I don't know. Well, gimme a New Orleans fizz."—So the fizz is made; a perfectly legal, perfectly non-alcoholic, perfectly moral, perfectly abominable fizz of one part cherry, one part grape, one part lemon, one part lime and six parts carbonated water. Why is it called a New Orleans fizz when it is no more a New Orleans fizz than a cup of beef-tea is Mumm's Extra Dry? Because, as a race, we will have our little pretensions, and the drug store bar keeps pace.

You can buy, in almost any drug store in the country, a Chicago highball, a Manhattan cocktail, a gin rickey and a Kentucky rock and rye—

all perfectly legal, moral, upright, conscientious and appropriate for service at the annual outing of the Young People's Epworth League.

You can buy, in short fat flagons fraudulently modelled upon time-honoured patterns which belie their contents, Apricot Brandy, Benedictine, Cointreau, Grenadine, Vermouth and Crême de Menthe —all totally non-alcoholic except their names.

You can buy drinks which identify you not only with the young bloods of Europe, but with the strong and the two-fisted here at home: Yeast Foam Malted Milk, sold with the testimonial of Red Grange, and Nuxated Iron, which helped Willard lick Moran and then helped Dempsey knock out Willard.

You can buy drinks which identify you with far-away places, like Hawaiian Special and Mandalay Delight—or with great names chosen from the garden of the truly famous, like Mary Pickford's Own—or with Stolen Hours, Bed of Roses, and Forbidden Fruit.

And the whole business rather pathetically suggests that in the matter of being who we are and where we are and how we are, a good many of us wish we weren't.

§

The bright bulbs in the great white bowl above the fountain fill the room with light. The clock

hands peeping through a spray of paper smilax point to half past seven. It is an evening in early summer, as a count of the flies on the narrow strips of Tanglefoot fluttering in the lazy breeze of the electric fan would indicate to an observing naturalist. In the telephone booth at the opposite side of the store from the magazine rack where old Mrs. Carpenter has read patiently through seven magazines in the hope of finding one worth reading, a young gentleman about to make a date with a lady tries at the same time to be kittenish and yet inaudible through the flimsy door to certain little pitchers with big ears. At the penny watch-your-weight scales in the front of the store there is much to-do because Mama has caught Willie putting his foot on the platform, and the whole family is enjoying it.

The cash register clicks merrily. Fifteen—twenty — fifteen — twenty — twenty-five — twenty—fifteen. Over the counter to the man with a sore throat and the man with a bad cold and the man who needs something warming for his fever and the man whose wife is out of town and the school teacher whose boarding-house supper sends her here for a dessert and the high school girls who have just discovered Ronald Colman and the high school boys who have just discovered high school girls and the travelling salesman with

the bright-eyed wink and the frail old gentleman whose hand drums nervously with a quarter on the counter, there travels a parade of fruit parfaits, banana splits, snow-whites, Nabisco nuts, raspberry floats, prune whips, minced ham-and-tongue, hard cider flips, come-pick-me-ups and bromo-seltzers.

This is the new American bar, and its counterpart can be found in any town and any city at any rush hour of the morning or the evening. There is much about it that is characteristic of its background.

It has our prompt adoption of whatever is most recent and most perfect in mechanical devices, whether for the purpose of destroying germs, extracting juice, ejecting seeds, condensing steam, evaporating milk or calculating vitamins. It has our national ability to make speed whether or not the occasion warrants: a drug store dinner can be ordered, served, and eaten in ten minutes. It has, in the clink of every glass and the plea of every advertisement, that deep reverence for almighty Ice for which we are world-famous. In its marshmallow creams and its chopped-nut syrups it has the explanation of our famously bad stomachs. It has our eagerness to be up-to-date in what we like, and not to be behind the times if the town next door has just invented a new

phosphate called the Hop-to-Paris. It has our promptness and our amiability and our occasional rather wistful yearning to go soaring somewhere out of our own selves, even on such flimsy wings as are lent by a bootleg drink, a tumblerful of Dr. Gilpin's Bitters or a South Sea Island Sundae.

This is not the same old bar whose bright lights used to wink on the dividing line between the tough and tame, but we are living on another frontier.

BIGGER AND BETTER MURDERS

CHAPTER VI

BIGGER AND BETTER MURDERS

AT LEAST once a year there occurs the Crime of the Century. This is the same century, but it has a series of important crimes. A morning comes when the front page smokes and the same Bestial Deed, the same Positive Identification, the same Master Mind, the same Little Woman, the same Alleged Confession and the same Grim Prosecutor brighten the fireside of every home in a broad country. The efficient mechanics of the modern press make it possible for sixty million people to read of any important event at the same moment and in the same amazing detail. When it comes to focusing the attention of the whole nation searchingly upon a single subject, and giving it a single set of facts on which to test its moral values, it is doubtful whether anything really unifies the country like its murders.

Unwritten Law, Peremptory Challenge, Broken Home, Illicit Love-Nest, Jazz-Mad Generation, Aged Mother: twice a day, at the same hour of the morning and at the same hour of the evening

the same hot-from-the-griddle headlines tell their stories in millions of homes in every village street, every city avenue, and every tenement alley in the country. Everybody knows at the same hour that Material Witness, Smiling and Confident, Balks Prosecution as Alibi Fails. Everybody knows at the same hour that Tiger Girl, Stolidly Indifferent, Maintains Calm while Courtroom Gasps and Sleuths Comb City.

No detail of these vast affairs is permitted to escape the attention of the nation. A vast amount of money, a perfect organization of many thousands of men and an incredible amount of ingenuity are devoted to this purpose. While great presses pant for the five-star final, the linotype machines stand by to wait for a flash from leased wires leading straight to the Scene of Trial. The flash comes, in the sharp click of an electric typewriter. At the same moment the whole country learns State Rests, Naked Truth all Stubborn Defense asks of Arbiters of Fate in Impassioned Plea, with Women Barred from Courtroom.

§

At 9:33 on the evening of April 25th the home of Wilbur Harris in Highland Falls, a suburb of New York, is rocked by an explosion. Police, firemen, and reporters hurrying to the scene find

the Breakfast Nook in ruins. The kitchen is a mess. Plaster is still dropping from the ceiling. Across the stove lies the body of Wilbur Harris, badly shattered. The gas is on. But this has been no gas explosion. Investigation proves, instead, that one of the trays of the electric refrigerator intended for making cubes of ice has been filled with trinitrotoluene. Chapter One, of the great Ice-Box Murder.

Now an Ice-Box Murder is an Ice-Box Murder. It is distinctly news, and as the first such news in the annals of modern journalism no editor can overlook it. Next morning's papers tell the story. It was Wilbur Harris's habit to strike a match when he went to the ice-box looking for a cheese. His wife knew this. So did Lieutenant Mortimer Robins, stationed at the Johnstown Arsenal, where he is in charge of the high explosives section. The two admit conspiracy. The story grows. And as a matter of news no harm is done by the fact that the dead man's widow is a girl of twenty-one, blonde, bobbed-haired and vivacious, with slender legs, too full lips and exceedingly white shoulders.

Details follow, as the arrests are made and an illicit love affair begins to be uncovered. By the afternoon of the second day the copyrighted pictures of Mrs. Harris as Bo-Peep in a church

tableau at the age of twelve and the diagrams of the Harris kitchen with X marking the spot where the body was found have reached St. Louis. By the afternoon of the third day Lt. Robins has confessed that his love for Mrs. Harris dates from an evening when she sang "Over There" in amateur theatricals at an army post; Dr. Morton Lewis of Massachusetts Institute of Technology has discussed the explosive properties of trinitrotoluene in a simultaneously-released statement for three Boston papers and one of the New York tabloids has begun Life Chapters of the Ice Queen.

This is a many-sided story. It has novelty, passion, mystery (Wilbur Harris was killed by an explosion in an ice-tray, but who turned on the gas?) and somewhere a deep moral purpose. Moreover, it is manifestly true that both Blanche (only the tabloids call her the Ice Queen) and Lt. Robins are ordinary, everyday people of the sort we all know and count among our friends, and a note of commonplace, familiar things pervades the story. All of us have known lieutenants, all of us have known discontented wives, all of us have seen electric ice-boxes and all of us have admired the neat cubes of ice. In these circumstances it becomes the duty of the press, holding the mirror up to nature, to place the full facts of this very human story in its readers' hands. This

it does to the best of its ability, at times sacrificing space which might otherwise have been devoted to reports of the Tacna-Arica boundary commission and debates in the naval conference at Geneva.

New facts develop. It is learned that the petcock on the gas range had been forced open with a block of wood so as to leave no finger-prints, that Wilbur Harris had for some time been encouraged to develop a habit of eating something late at night and that Blanche had taken out insurance on the ice-box. The police sergeants who made the arrests discuss the motives of the crime, the prosecution announces what it will say to the defense, the defense rehearses its reply and two camera men who hide in a bush snap the dead man's mother talking to a grocer.

With all these facts the press keeps pace, its public now having acquired an interest in the case which cannot be ignored. The Sunday papers contribute parallels from the World's Great Loves, essays from psychologists on the nature of temptation and special articles on the history of great explosions. The tabloids interview the families of both defendants, print composite photographs of electric ice-boxes changing into electric chairs, offer prizes for the best letter of twenty-five words on the cure of crime, start

campaigns to stop the selling of mechanical refrigerators and develop three schools of phrenologists who differ as to what the bumps on the Ice Queen's head mean. A Fundamentalist minister in Kentucky preaches a sermon on Death as the wages of sin and Jazz as the cause of crime, and twenty-seven liberal editors in nine different states defend the younger generation.

On a Tuesday morning in the sixth week following the death of Wilbur Harris, the court of Highland County begins picking a jury for the Robins-Harris trial, a process requiring time since the rank-and-file of prospective jurors is now so expert on the whole history of the case from first to last that it differs only as to the probable psychological reflexes of the defendants on the morning after the commission of the crime.

Two weeks from the following Friday the trial begins. This is the signal for the world's largest portable electric switchboard to come wheeling into action.

§

This switchboard is a famous institution. It is the property of the Western Union Company, the pride of the news profession and the only portable electric switchboard in existence which is capable of handling twenty thousand words an hour. It is a gigantic metal box into which one

hundred and eighty wires can be jacked at once, opening direct and instantaneous communication with newspaper offices in every section of the country.

This great machine requires weeks for its installation, and like all really wonderful things is brought out only on occasions worthy of its hire: it is to an Ice-Box Murder what the Crown of St. Edward is to the coronation of a George V. Murder trials are its chief interest, though it is not used exclusively for murder trials; it went to Philadelphia for the Dempsey-Tunney fight before it was shipped to Somerville, N. J., for the opening of the Hall-Mills case. Between such times as really prompt it into action it rests majestically in the central offices of the Western Union Company, scorning the small-fry of average news and waiting for some foe worthy of its mettle to bring it snorting from its warehouse like a dragon from its cave.

The installation of the switchboard is the first important move in the reporting of a national murder trial. It is followed by the remodelling of the courtroom to permit the introduction of press tables, the removal of a closet wall in the anteroom to make room for more stenographers, the setting-up of flashlight equipment on either side of the judge's bench, the allocation of seats for

the reporters, the installation of leased wires in the basement, the enlistment of a motorcycle corps to carry photographs to the nearest rapid transit station, the reservation of hotel rooms for special correspondents sent to the scene from other cities, and, if the trial is held in a small town like Somerville, the setting-up of faro games, patent medicine stands, and oriental tent-shows for the large army of tourists who may be expected to flock into town in the hope of seeing one or both defendants or at least bringing home from the Court House a No Smoking sign, or from the field in which the deceased met death a sprig of poison ivy.

This is the mechanical equipment assembled for a trial of national importance. To what use it will be put in the Ice-Box Murder may be judged from the work it has done on other fronts in recent months.

At the Hall-Mills trial fifty reporters from metropolitan newspapers and press associations were present at the Grand Jury proceedings; two hundred came for the trial itself; one newspaper in New York (the *News*) had sixteen correspondents on the scene; another (the *Mirror*) had thirteen; fifty photographers were on duty at all hours; until the closing days of the trial ten were stationed in the courtroom; an eleventh fell through the skylight on the day the defense called

Mrs. Hall; relays of stenographers and typists rushed the testimony to the telegraph wires as fast as it came from the lips of witnesses; twenty-eight operators manned the portable electric switchboard in the basement; sixty leased wires carried bulletins to the country; eight daily papers leased whole houses in Somerville to accommodate their staffs; and the local market for bed-linen soared when the Hotel Somerset put fifty cots in a ballroom ordinarily thrown open to the public only once a week.

The Hall-Mills case was what the *Daily News* in New York called "a nice, clean crime." At the Gray-Snyder trial, which the *Daily News* considered a more sordid affair, four rows of ten tables with three seats to the table were installed for the reporters; one hundred and twenty news men and special writers filled them; two Western Union overseers policed the traffic of messenger boys rushing copy to the press room; thirteen telegraph operators fed a battery of twenty-one leased wires; newspapers in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Birmingham, Syracuse, Louisville, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Atlanta sent special correspondents to supplement the press association stories; pushing his way through the crowd to see justice done, Assistant District Attorney Froessel had his pocket picked; a microphone on the witness stand poured

testimony through a battery of loud speakers; and the Reverend Aimee McPherson, covering the trial for the New York *Graphic* from the vantage point of southern California, called on God to teach young men to say, "I want a wife like mother—not a Red Hot Cutie!"

§

Now it is clear that what is new is not interest in murder, which is something very old, but interest in murder satisfied more abundantly, with richer variety and in warmer tones than was possible before the swift development of modern methods and inventions.

The news reel, the loud speaker, the rotogravure section, the tabloid, the composite picture, the telautograph, the great bulk of the 48-page paper, the electric switchboard, the press association in its ultra-modern form and the urbanization of rural areas are all developments of recent years. The country no longer needs to wait for its great national murders until they actually occur. If a really first-class murder does not come along after a decent interval of time, some second-class murder is taken by the hand, led to the centre of the stage and advertised so successfully with all the modern art of ballyhoo that, claiming to be a first-class murder, it actually becomes one. A

nationally famous trial for homicide is no longer a startling interruption of a more lethargic train of thought. It has become an institution, as periodic in its public appearances and reappearances as the cycle of the seasons.

Here, as a nation, is our literature. At the end of the first eleven days of the Hall-Mills trial a total of 5,000,000 words had been telegraphed from Somerville, breaking all records in the history of journalism. At the end of eighteen days the total was 9,000,000. At the end of twenty-four days it was 12,000,000: words enough if put into one newspaper, said the Associated Press, to fill 960 pages of solid reading matter. Words enough, if put into book form, to make a shelf of novels twenty-two feet long. This is the literature of the nation. It is the literature of the nation because it does not wait for its patrons on bookstore shelves or gather dust in libraries, but is sold out, read and realistically debated within two hours after it comes smoking from the press. It needs no pushing, needs no advertising, needs no criticism; all it needs is "Extra! Willie on the Stand!"

It is a vast literature, and to it contribute not only many expert writers of headlines and many trained reporters, but an ever increasing army of celebrities. Some of them can write, like Will Durant; some of them can preach,

like Billy Sunday; some of them can act, like Willard Mack; some of them can weep, like Dorothy Dix; some of them can roar, like John Roach Straton. But they can all do something; they are all famous; and so catholic is a truly national literature that it does not ask for more.

Will Durant turns reporter; so does Billy Sunday, so does Willard Mack, so does Dorothy Dix, so does David Wark Griffith, so does Natacha Rambova. Aimee McPherson wires sermons to the New York *Graphic*, Peggy Joyce has her picture taken with a pencil, Dr. Straton covers the Snyder case for Mr. Hearst's New York *American* and finds, "Thoughtful consideration will show that almost literally every one of the Ten Commandments is involved."

Words pile up. The wires hum. Fresh news rattles from the linotypes. Millions of readers argue whether the thumb-print was really Willie's, what Mrs. Snyder wished to do when she unlocked the kitchen door, whether Henry Stevens caught his fish or faked it.

Presses roar. The right of the defense to issue peremptory challenges on the basis of mere prejudice is debated by bankers at their luncheons, street-cleaners trading shovels, and housewives shelling peas. The Secretary of War issues a strong statement on the All-American ship canal,

but the National Security League, the American Defense Society and the Military Order of Foreign Wars are too intent on the topography of De Russey's Lane to pick him up on it. The worst pork-barrel bill in seven years goes through Congress with only a few professionals watching it. A crisis with China eases, as the Snyder case turns five million, because China no longer dominates the news and there is something else to talk about.

Extra—Extra—Pig Woman's Life in Danger! Extra—Extra—Sashweight Found in Cellar! Extra—Extra—Willie Scores Off Prosecution! Extra—Extra—Still Loves Ruth, Says Gray! With supreme fidelity to a single all-absorbing topic of discussion, millions of Americans in factories, on farms, in kitchens, barnyards, file rooms, filling stations, hay-fields, dance halls, vestryrooms, turkish baths and ferris wheels debate the merits of the latest trial. New records fall. The great American public is off on another national spree, enjoying once more a vicarious thrill in other people's vices and revelling in strange crimes.

This is our Roman Circus.

§

It is a great game, but there is one curious thing about it. The official agency which stages these great spectacles fails to share the profits.

Here are the lawyers in the case. No matter how poor a defense they make, no matter how badly they bungle their chances and how aimlessly they wrangle, if they are associated with the Hall-Mills case or the Ice-Box Murder—if their pictures grace the press of forty states and their pleas are wired to a thousand papers—then, no matter what the verdict, they will profit handsomely.

Here is the prosecutor for the state. If he wins his case he can have his choice between a lucrative private practice and a career in politics.

Here are the telegraph companies. What they earn from these affairs is private business. But it is worth noting that press rates are a full third of ordinary commercial rates; and when millions of words are sent to thousands of newspapers the full commercial possibilities of the situation may be guessed at.

Here are the newspapers. Periodically some journal here or there experiments in self-denial of its unquestioned legal right to make full use of all this glittering material. For several years the Boston *Traveler* has made it its churchly custom to print no murders on its first page on Christmas Eve, and the Fayetteville (N.C.) *Observer* tried recently to delete crime news entirely for a fortnight but brought it back at the

end of seven days when its readers voted 60 to 1 for a restoration. And why should Fayetteville live in an ivory tower? Why shouldn't the press make use of the most sensational and thrilling material in the whole scope of journalism—when it is there for the asking, when the public wants it, when it is part of life, when without it the news utterly lacks proportion and when it gives life colour (and sells papers)?

It is really an extraordinary situation which confronts us, as one great trial follows another across a national scene. The newspapers acquire prestige, buy new presses, and become more indispensable to their publics with the unfolding of each chapter. The telegraph companies make fortunes. The gentlemen of the bar cash in. The successful district attorney becomes an available candidate for high public honours overnight. Only the state fails to profit.

Yet it is the state which arranges the whole affair and stages it and holds over it that penalty of death which gives it pace and meaning. It is the state which packs its courtrooms with flashlights and press tables, permits its basements to be filled with wires, coöperates with the press in arranging interviews and schedules, supplies the jail and tips off the reporters when a thrill is coming. And for these services the state not only fails

to receive even a nominal fee, but is put to considerable expense in gathering its evidence, maintaining its court, paying the wages of the district attorney who is now busily becoming famous and providing the jury with its board and lodgings. When the books of every other party to the proceedings show a profit, the state's books show a loss.

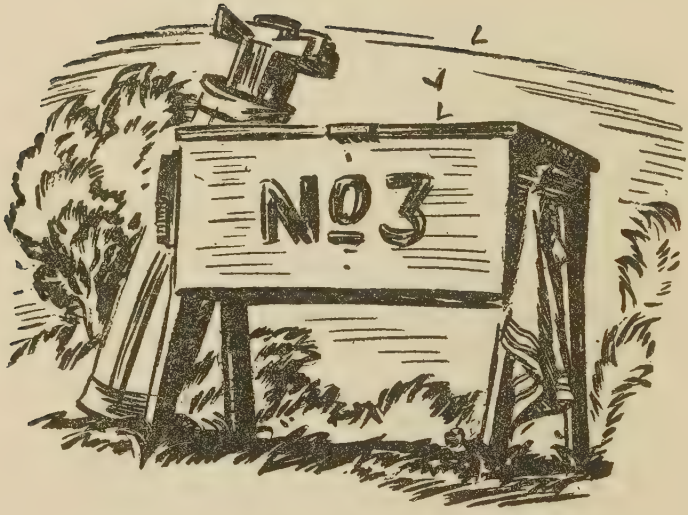
Sooner or later some statesman in Congress is certain to ask why this anomaly should be permitted to continue, why the state, which does most, should profit least. It would be an act of justice as well as a shrewd business move, this statesman will point out, if the Government transferred these spectacles from the stuffy, inadequate courtrooms where they are held to-day, staged them in great amphitheatres and charged admission.

Bowls are available in every section of the country. The price of admission could be high, in view of the demand for seats and the fact that there would be only one original cast and no road companies. Taxes could be cut. Five spectacles a year, each lasting forty days, would net $100,000,000 in an average bowl accommodating 50,000 people. Syndicate rights could be sold to the press. Sectional jealousies could be avoided by making each section wait its turn and giving the

corn belt as many trials as Wall Street. It might be possible, all sources of revenue considered, to cut taxes to a point where they disappeared and the state began to show a profit.

The Roman Coliseum was a national institution. If we are to have a circus of our own it can be argued that we ought to develop it with the high purpose and creative effort worthy of a more resourceful nation.

PLUS FOURS


No 3

CHAPTER VII

PLUS FOURS

TWO million Americans now spend part of every summer in a sand-pit. Golf may lack certain thrills that go with the modern murder trial, but it has thrills of its own that are enduring. Thousands of Americans who never saw a goose-neck putter or a dog-leg hole till 1920 now spend several hours every summer afternoon trying conscientiously to keep their heads down, hold their arms in and let their elbows follow through. Thousands of Americans who never heard of par till they were well past forty have begun to practise pitches to the green. Nothing is done by halves in the United States. And on the crest of an enthusiasm which has filled this nation with more putting greens than savings banks and public libraries, golf has swept the country.

This was the lady's game, if you remember. It is easy to recall the popular conviction, held until the last few years, that golf was a game for elderly professors and presidents of banks, wholly devoid of excitement and about as sporting as back-

gammon. It seemed preposterous then to believe that great armies of lawyers, jewellers, hardware men, and drygoods merchants in the cities and smaller towns could ever be persuaded to take golf seriously, let alone with ecstasy. As for the sporting crowd that followed baseball and the prize-ring: golf was glorified croquet for dudes. Times have changed considerably. To-day the very gods of baseball and the prize-ring have gone in for golf, and the rotogravure sections bring us home-run kings and heavyweight champions wearing tassels at their knees.

For golf is no longer the game that was played on a few secluded courses by old men. It is a game played all over the country by more people than play any other outdoor game, or ever have played any other. So rapidly are courses being built that the total value of golf real estate in this country is now estimated at a billion and a half.

Every possible variety of course is represented here. There are courses so magnificent that their grounds alone are worth several million dollars and courses so humble that they can be bought for a few hundred. There are courses whose club-houses, done in the Italian-Spanish manner, with hand-carved fireplaces, imported roofs and Georgian locker-rooms, are valued at $850,000; and there are courses whose plain shacks of unorna-

mented pine are valued at $100, furniture included. There are courses actually within the city limits of the largest cities in the country—New York has one three blocks from the Grand Central Station—and there are courses in towns so small that they appear only on the larger maps. The town of Gaylord, with a total population of 356, claims one of the best nine-hole courses in north-central Kansas.

Over these courses—five thousand of them in all—tramp two million experts, amateurs and willing plodders, trying for par, for bogey, or for something over bogey, remembering to keep their muscles flexed and put back chunks of turf. So thick on one another's heels do these people come, filling the air with flying balls and laying down a barrage of shots ahead of them, that golf has even begun to have its casualties. A single insurance company, the Travelers of Hartford, now pays four hundred premiums annually for accidents resulting from wild drives, flying irons, slippery turf and broken glasses.

Golf has become a national institution. The War Department builds courses at its Army posts and the Department of Agriculture coöperates with the Golf Association at three field stations in the development of a perfect grass for putting greens. One half billion dollars is the estimate of the

New York *Times* of the sum this nation now spends annually on greens fees, new equipment, lawn-mowers, caddies, and lost balls. A good golf course is the first prerequisite of any summer place which hopes to have its quota of vacation travel. Even tours abroad are advertised as golfing tours. "Sail with us around the world," says an advertisement of the Canadian Pacific lines. "Play golf in Japan, China, India, Egypt, Java and Ceylon!"

No need to worry about missing your home course while you are doing Europe. See Naples and hole out in one.

§

The amazing popularity which golf enjoys to-day with millions of Americans of all ages and all classes is scarcely to be explained on the ground that it is good exercise or good training for the nerves or that it takes men back to nature. For there are more convenient forms of exercise, and other ways of going back to nature than by getting in a bunker. This game is more than a mere stroll through the hills or the slow pursuit of an unimportant ball through miles of verdant pasture. Golf is great for a variety of reasons—but first of all because it happens to fit in with certain enthusiasms which are perfectly normal to every modern man but in this methodical modern world of ours denied expression.

This is a day when the conveniences of life are widely shared and the discomforts of the frontier days are lacking. Nobody travelling from one city to another needs to jolt along rough highways in a stage-coach. Nobody needs to camp all night on an open trail when he switches to a new route at a junction. Nobody has to look out for an Indian when he opens his door for the paper in the morning. All this is doubtless profit. But it is likewise loss. Life, if incomparably less hazardous and more convenient than it used to be in frontier days, has much less tang. The flint-lock gun, the squirrel cap and the powder-horn are laid away in the glass boxes of the historical associations, and with them have gone much of our folklore and adventure.

It is into this world, a good world but a drab world by comparison with its frontier past, that golf brings joy and colour. Try pitching a ball that doesn't float over a lake that is filled with bulrushes, if you are looking for adventure. Come into the locker-room, if it is folklore you are after, and listen to the talk.

". . . more damn distance out of that damn club . . ."

". . . trouble with you, Harvey, is you look up too soon and your stance is bad and you swing too quick and you don't time right. If you

wouldn't stand so far behind the ball and sway so much . . ."

". . . all right, Judge, so long as it's you, you can pour me another little one . . ."

". . . would have had an eighty if I hadn't missed that putt, and if I hadn't driven out of bounds . . ."

". . . you're a fool, Gus, to play a brassie on that hole. You're crazy. Why, that hole's an iron shot. The logical way to play that hole . . ."

". . . Don't tell me! I got a three there yesterday."

There is a charm about this game that comes from kinship with a common purpose. There is the solid satisfaction of meeting with men who play the same shots, use the same clubs, and talk a common language. Golf has restored the pow-wow to the modern world, and the shower-bath is our counterpart of the old campfire in the hills. It is not bad fun, in these less eventful days, to gather at the nineteenth hole, swap jokes, plan the day's attack and debate the choice of weapons. It is not bad fun to wear clothes that are made for the open road, in a world dressed up in office clothes and collars. This is no game for office clothes. It is no game for lady-like white flannels and shoes that stain with grass. It is a game for hob-nailed boots, plus fours, and woollen stockings.

It is easy enough to say of plus fours that they hang like sand-bags on the average human frame, but this is not the important fact about them. The important fact is that they have brought the modern world a substitute for leather chaps.

It is easy enough to say of woollen stockings done in emeralds, purples, heliotropes, and carmines, laid out in checkers, diamonds, and hexagonals, that they do not add an inch to the distance a golf ball can be driven from a tee. But this is to miss the whole point of the costume. In a drab age these bright legs are the war-paint of the nation.

§

What golf has brought us is a chance to play the pioneer again, and there is no rôle that gives us greater satisfaction. Call it a Scotch game, if you like. That it gives us a taste of the frontier, who can doubt? This is no game that wanders aimlessly across country, without a purpose. Nor is it a game played in a yard, penned up like baseball, tennis, or croquet. The whole countryside is open to it. Yet the whole countryside has been pre-arranged to provide a series of new frontiers and a succession of new goals.

Come out to the first tee where the caravans are starting on their trek cross-country. Beyond the

hill where the fairway climbs between two groves of pine lies No. 1—Par 4, Bogey 5. Call that the pleasant country on the far side of the Appalachians. Across a flatlands dotted with green mounds and clumps of grass lies No. 2—Par 3, Bogey 4. Call that the Ohio Valley. Beyond the brook that weaves its way through this low ground lies No. 3—Par 3, Bogey 3. Call that the corn belt on beyond the Mississippi. It is easy going, so far. But keep your niblick handy. For on past the flatlands and the Mississippi lie the Bad Lands and the Rockies, to say nothing of the Grand Canyon and the Painted Desert.

This is a frontier game. The whole point of it consists of an advance through rolling country, in the straightest possible line and with the fewest possible strokes, from one ambushed outpost to another. Sometimes the route leads off through hills so high that the trail is charted only by a "direction flag" stuck on the horizon like a blazed tree marking the old wagon-road to Oregon. Hole No. 4 lies in a hollow ringed with cypress trees. The caravan halts here for water, then presses on to No. 5. A pinch of sand, a teed-up ball, a full-arm swing—and a long shot zooms out across the hill toward some new frontier, still unseen.

This is a frontier game in the best frontier spirit

of America, a game of fording streams, climbing hills for the lay of the land, hacking a new path, if need be, through the underbrush, and pushing on from goal to goal. Hidden dangers lurk along the line of march, dangers as smiling and as treacherous as the false friendship of the Blackfeet on the road to the Northwest in '56; pits and bunkers, soft ground that gives way beneath the feet and witch-grass that looks hospitable but is made to snare the unsuspecting stranger in a grisly trap.

There are chances for a sudden charge across open country between two hazards closed in narrowly on either side.

There are chances for fine flirtations with disaster by risking everything on a shot played wide and high over a stretch of marsh, where failure means sure capture by the enemy and torture at the stake.

There is joy in an approach that holds the turf, in a putt that does not wobble, in a drive hit hard enough to whistle, whether or not it comes to rest among the daisies in the rough.

And always, filling the game with adventure and giving it its zest, there is the business of closing in relentlessly from all sides on the green, running to earth a hunted quarry. This stealthy approach to an appointed rendezvous through bush and

bramble is our modern counterpart of stalking red men on the plains.

Over the hills come the troopers.

". . . Look at that shot! Right on the green! That's my second, Harvey . . ."

". . . on purpose? Sure, I played a slice on purpose! Couldn't you tell from the way I stood?"

". . . ought to had a four—I'd have sunk it sure if that caddy hadn't moved just when I started putting. . . ."

". . . Say! if you think *that* was a drive you ought to have seen me hitting them yesterday! I was out two hundred yards on every drive and I had my irons working beautifully and I was laying them dead to the flag on every pitch, and on that tricky fourteenth hole . . ."

It's all in the game. The Indians are dead. There are no Blackfeet left to conquer. What is modern man to boast about if not his golf scores?

ROLL YOUR OWN DIPLOMA

CHAPTER VIII

ROLL YOUR OWN DIPLOMA

NOTHING in the development of the American scene from the golf course to the filling station is more spectacular than the growth of the college campus. New colleges are being founded every spring. The number of undergraduates has doubled in the last eight years. The Freshman cap and the Junior prom and the class-day spree and the Gothic arch are all national institutions. Two million degrees have been awarded since 1917 and there must be enough class ivy now in the United States to blanket the Rocky Mountains.

One has only to go back to 1896 and Harvard's first break with Princeton to find a vastly different scene. Biochemical laboratories, peg-top trousers, honour systems, ornamented oil-skins, elective courses, college garages, intelligence tests and class morale were all unheard of. Columbia was a modest little place with a few stone halls and nineteen hundred students, instead of a rollicking

big mill with forty million dollars' worth of real estate and thirty-three thousand students. Tuition was low, classes were small, and there wasn't a single stadium west of the Mississippi River big enough to seat the army and the navy.

The University of Washington had just appeared on the horizon in the west and had three hundred students. Iowa was a little place about the size of Amherst now. Amherst was microscopic. College incomes for the whole country amounted to only a little more than fifteen million dollars instead of a third of a billion. Football coaches were paid less for their services than members of the Cabinet. There were ninety-six thousand college students in the United States, as compared with three-quarters of a million.

Moreover, in 1896 a campus was a campus. Colleges had not yet begun to stray across the country, offering to set themselves up in anybody's living room through the medium of extension courses. Young Mohammed went to the mountain, and not the mountain to Mohammed. In our own times the growth of the extension course has been amazing. Classes are taught by mail, and the radio is coming into style. "If the home-student has access to a good receiving set," says the University of Iowa in its latest catalogue, "he should ask to have his name placed on the

mailing list to receive announcements of radio-correspondence courses from Station W S U I."

Thousands of college lectures now fill the mails and begin to fill the air. Thousands of degrees are awarded annually to long-distance students who have never sat on the Sophomore fence or cut a class in Freshman English. So popular is the extension course, and so swift has been its growth, that more than two hundred colleges in all parts of the country, ranging in size from little Shurtleff with its 178 students to mammoth Columbia with its 33,000, now assign topics, grade papers, and confer degrees by mail. The University of Chicago carries 7,400 correspondence students on its rolls, Missouri has 3,500, Oklahoma 3,500, Texas 4,500, City College of New York 5,000, Southern California 10,000, Wisconsin 20,000 and other large universities like numbers. Moreover, this is a new development and it is plain that we are only in the first stages of a program aiming ultimately at a-degree-for-everybody-and-everybody-for-a-degree which is destined to take us far.

Think twice before you scoff at the next Ford touring car adorned from stem to stern with sixteen college pennants. By the time the degrees won by the sons of the family are added to the degrees won by the daughters, father's extension courses in soil culture and practical agronomy

are added to mother's extension courses in home economics and household management, and it is remembered that cousin Bess matriculates next week at Chicago for a home-study course in plain and fancy needlework, the sixteen pennants may be bona fide.

§

Various reasons are given for the spectacular growth of the collegiate system and the success with which the college spirit has been inducted into millions of American homes. The wealth of the country has increased enormously in recent years and a college education, either on the spot, by mail, or over the loud speaker, has become a possibility for thousands of people who never expected to have an alma mater.

Other factors are familiar. There is the tremendous advertisement given to college education in general and college life in particular, by a football season which now sees thirty million people paying $50,000,000 every fall to witness championship games in every section of the country. There is the widespread belief that college life is rich in its diversions and the conviction that a college degree means a passport into good society. There is the ballyhoo which many of the colleges have carried up and down the country, with

moving pictures, lecture tours and "scoreboard parties," for the confessed purpose of filling their halls with new recruits and growing bigger as well as better.

No doubt a wide variety of casual and extraneous factors has contributed to the growth of the college spirit in America, but the process has been enormously assisted by an essential change in the character of the colleges themselves. They have diversified their interests. They have re-interpreted the spirit of arts and letters. They have filled their curricula with courses running the gamut of contemporary occupations, arts, and pleasures. And if there are now more hundreds of thousands of young Americans in colleges and universities than would have seemed possible to a Late Victorian, it is for one chief reason because colleges and universities have left their erstwhile academic paths and are now offering classes as spectacular in their diversity as the kaleidoscopic background from which these young Americans are drawn.

Nothing is too remote from Greek or too thoroughly in the tempo of our lively modern times for the up-to-date curriculum to pass it by. A catalogue of modern courses reads like the front page of a newspaper plus the table of contents in a house and garden magazine. Columbia gives

courses in Bond Salesmanship, Brokerage Accounts, Photoplay Composition ("including such technical devices as the iris, the fade, double exposure, etc."), Banking, Bee Keeping, the Business of the Theatre, Foreign Investments, the New York Money Market, Practical Poultry Raising, Elementary Millinery, and the Care of Lawns. Syracuse gives courses in Practical Table Service, Stock Market Methods, Store Management and Modern Salesmanship, including "the goods to be sold," "securing the interview" and "presenting the selling proposition." Southern California gives courses in Advanced Tailoring, Traffic Management, and Real Estate Advertising by such means as "billboards," "trips to property," and the development of "golf links, country clubs and model homes."

Nor are such courses at all exceptional. Courses in Advertising are now offered at more than fifty of the larger universities; Pennsylvania has a course in "lay-outs," "mediums," "campaigns," "forceful letters" and "successful selling." Courses in Real Estate, courses in Life Insurance, courses in Fire Insurance, courses in Business Correspondence, courses in Interior Decoration and courses in Purchasing and Storing are taught along with courses in Philosophy and Homer. Southern California offers a course in Apartment House

Management, Virginia a course in Follow-up Methods, Indiana a course in Renting and Leasing, and Chicago a course in the Dedication and the Toast.

And all such courses, it should be noted, are not mere campus courses. They can be taught by mail. For the front line of the collegiate advance is now in thousands of scattered homes. And in the march of the universities across-country the range of courses offered in extension work is, if anything, even more brilliantly diversified than the range of courses offered on the campus. Chicago spreads a choice of 396 courses before the correspondence student. Columbia offers him 745. He can apply to Nebraska for a course in Radio-communication and the Operation of Receiving Sets, to City College of New York for a course in Rug-weaving, to California for a course in Automobile Upkeep and Repair, to Wisconsin for a course in Credits and Collections, and to Cornell for a course in the Administration of Hotels.

Nor do all these courses stress the mere utilitarian. At Columbia the stay-at-home student can take his choice between courses as practical as Sales-letter Writing and as erudite as Goethe's Faust. At Kansas he can run the gamut from courses as near home as Building Up Mail-order

Business to courses as far away as Elementary Celestial Mechanics, Extent of the Universe and its Duration. Chicago offers him everything from Purchase and Storage of Coal to General Morphology of the Bryophytes and Pteridophytes.

So far has the process of diversification gone and so brilliantly varied is the curriculum now presented to the student who elects to pursue knowledge on his own front porch, that nothing in the whole range of average human interest seems too remote to constitute a subject of instruction. In self-defense, and to save useless correspondence, a footnote in the newest catalogue of Ohio State gives warning to the public that, "This University does not have a course in book-keeping, telegraphy, oratory, or embalming."

§

What we have here is a range of collegiate endeavour which would have astounded the early academicians, but the stampede for higher and higher education in America does not stop with this. Nor is the full story of our modern progress told in three decades of achievement which have put colleges in every corner of the country, given the nation half a billion dollars' worth of collegiate real estate, filled college class-rooms with more

than three-quarters of a million students, turned out single classes at single universities as large as whole regiments of the National Guard, made Automobile Upkeep, Apartment House Management, Practical Table Service, Bond Salesmanship, and Bee Keeping subjects of academic instruction and instituted the practice of teaching the morphology of bryophytes by mail. For all this is only part of the modern education of America; and on the heels of the colleges, adding new millions to the rolls of those who are studying for new degrees, comes the enterprising army of the correspondence schools.

It is a new scene, and doubtless these more informal colleges which are all office and no campus face a keener competition than they did in the days before Columbia, Syracuse, Indiana, Kansas, Southern California, and two hundred other universities borrowed some of their ideas. Doubtless they are short on Gothic architecture and would enjoy more prestige if they had football teams. No matter. The correspondence school has its own place in American life, and like its older rivals it has grown prodigiously in the rush for education which has swept this country.

Are you a book-agent and would you like to be a managing-director? Are you a stenographer and would you like to be a movie-queen? Do you

sell shirts and would you like to be a Dominating Personality?

There is a coupon waiting to be clipped; wonders can be worked with will-power, and through the advertising pages of the magazines the prophets of successful living call for volunteers.

Learn to be a musician. "The world lies at the feet of the person who can play a musical instrument," says the Ferry school of music, and offers an easy way of mastering the banjo, ukelele, and guitar.

Learn to be a constructive thinker. Nicholson's Mental and Physical Training School offers courses in "Vividness," "Sound Judgment," and "Stupendous Thinking."

Learn to be a detective. "Never in history have trained detectives been so needed as they are right now," says the American Detective Training School, and offers courses in "trapping," "tracing," "shadowing," "guarding," "various kinds of guarding," "how to guard and what to guard against."

Learn to act for the moving pictures. "Twenty million movie patrons are calling for new faces," says the Film Information Bureau. "Can you feel these mighty millions calling *you ?*"

Learn to be a finger-print expert. Finger-printing has the advantage of growing better

with hard times. "When ordinary jobs are scarce," says the University of Applied Science, "more and more finger-print experts are needed to keep pace with the inevitable crime wave."

Learn to be a Tiger Man. "It is the Tiger Men who win the Battles of Life to-day," says the Atlas School of Muscular Science. "They win the battles of Love, of Lucre, of Luxury. They get the things they want! They TAKE them!"

And why not? Anything is possible with enough courage and persistence. Anything can be done by the man determined not to fail. The light burns late on the parlor table, and all over the country young Americans are deep in the study of finger-printing, shadowing, moving picture technique, sound judgment and stupendous thinking. All over the country stuffy bedrooms echo with imaginary applause as new students of the art of forceful speaking pause after a sudden effort, florid and triumphant. All over the country, overcoats propped up in chairs represent stony and hard-hearted bosses who are being talked to—now, for the first time, as they deserve to be talked to—by erstwhile badgered clerks from whom words flow in an unbroken stream of eloquence, accompanied by appropriate gestures.

To the hundreds of thousands of young Americans on the campus and the hundreds of thou-

sands of young and old Americans now taking university extension courses, add two million in the correspondence schools.

§

No doubt there is a wildness of aim and a confusion of purpose about much of our education in America. Thousands of students on the campus are lost in a maze of courses so elaborately varied that they run from Cost Accounting to Norse-Icelandic Prose and so ingeniously cut off from one another that not even the Dean can find his way around. Thousands of students of extension courses have simply started in, from a point midway in space, on something which has suddenly occurred to them as important and something which they will promptly drop for something else when something else seems suddenly to be still more important. Thousands of students of the correspondence schools who have nothing to say are sitting up nights to improve their diction.

It is a strange scene, and yet it is not un-American. For the wild rush with which we are now engaged in getting ourselves educated is the same wild rush with which we settled a continent. Twenty-five colleges suddenly add courses in Apartment House Management because more

apartments are being built, the idea gains ground that running apartment houses is a lucrative profession and thousands of Americans promptly clamour for a science. Twenty-five more colleges suddenly add courses in the technology of running drygoods stores and notion counters because the success of Standard Oil and General Motors seems to stand as vivid and compelling proof that somewhere in the mysteries of overhead and cost accounting lies the key to bigger profits. Two hundred correspondence schools spring up overnight, offering courses in the command of language and the power of effective speech, because an age of super-salesmanship has driven home the theory that if a man can talk enough—well enough, long enough, and loud enough—his boss will pick him for a winner, his friends will take him for a sage, his company will vote him better wages, he can dominate the after-dinner conversation, quote freely from the masters and amaze his fellow-guests.

This is a restless land, and its people tire of moving rhythmically but unadventurously through a familiar orbit. For years it was their custom to pack their goods and move again whenever they heard of a sun so kind and a soil so rich that the corn grew eight feet tall. That day is gone. But Americans still pull up stakes with an

ease that surprises Europe and move their goods to a new frontier at the opposite end of life from that at which they started.

The farmer's son goes to college and becomes a mechanical engineer. The engineer's son goes to college and becomes a scientific farmer. The bank teller takes a night-course in admiralty law, the school-teacher studies structural drafting after hours, the street-car conductor is going in for real estate when he has finished six more lessons and the butcher's boy is learning to be a detective. The night lamp burns. And the colleges grow and build new halls and add new courses and invent new sciences because the search goes on. It is the will of millions of Americans to find the end of the rainbow.

HOME WAS NEVER LIKE THIS

CHAPTER IX

HOME WAS NEVER LIKE THIS

THIS bit of sunny Spain just thirty-seven minutes from the Public Square was the old Kearns farm for more than half a century. It was the old Kearns farm while the city slept beyond the hills and the Public Square lay miles away along dirt roads. Then suddenly the city woke and stretched and pushed its electric transit out across the hills and brought its smoke-stacks nearer and sent its army of land-hungry citizens pushing farther and farther hunting suburbs and fresh air. This was the old Kearns farm while three generations of Kearns boys husked their corn in the same weather-beaten shed, undisturbed by thoughts of a future traffic problem in their barnyard. It is no longer the old Kearns farm. It is Española Terrace Gardens.

There is a steam-shovel digging where the cow-barn used to stand. It is excavating for the new Community Centre Club, which is to be an exact replica of the Alhambra at Granada. There is a line of white stakes running from the potato patch

to a point about two hundred yards beyond the silo. That is Buena Vista Avenue. It is going to lead from the Public Library, which is to be an exact replica of the Baptistery at Pisa, to the Public Filling Station, which is to be an exact replica of the Puerta de la Loreja at Seville.

Down at the end of the pasture, where the tractors are pulling stumps, is to rise the Española Auditorium, which will reproduce the Baths of Caracalla, and over there at the end of the apple orchard—that will be the corner of Buenos Aires Place and Rio de Janeiro Street—there is to be an apartment building with a real leaning tower. Beyond the apple orchard the property of Española Terrace Gardens does not reach. But flanking it on the south and west, there are to be subdivisions of the original development later on, when the market warrants their creation: Española Terrace Garden Gables and Española Terrace Garden Gables Manors.

It is not too much to hope that in five years the swamp beyond the willow trees will be a golf course with a par of 72 and a clubhouse on the model of the Doge's Palace.

§

The practice of promoting real estate booms through the wholesale importation of Old World

architecture and the cultivation of a romantic background has come to the front in the recent history of Florida: so much to the front that it is unnecessary to tarry over the story except for the light it throws upon a whole series of Spanish and Italian and Italian-Spanish ventures now in progress in widely scattered sections of the country.

When the boom came to Florida it came first to a seaboard rich in natural beauty. Here, in a setting of palms and surf and coral beach, was a romantic background. Industrious landscaping made it even more romantic. Distinctive types of architecture were developed at each project. The Palazzo-Firenze Apartments arose at Davis Islands and five Campanile of San Marco were planned for Venetian Isles. A conscientious effort was made to devote to romantic purposes all utilitarian improvements (drain ditches, for example) which lent themselves to more exotic treatment. Old towns acquired slogans. New towns acquired names—names of far-away romantic places which set the imagination soaring as they rippled from the tongue: Rio Vista, San Josè, and Santa Monica; Villa Venetia, El Portal, and Santa Rosa Beach. Wherever the situation of a project was particularly happy some special effort was made to reproduce an Old World charm. Coral Gables brought twelve gondoliers

from Venice, with two gondolas to the gondolier, "equipped with all the picturesque accoutrements of the real Venetian craft."

Conceived in this spirit the boom in Florida produced a series of new cities which acquired national reputations overnight. There was Coral Gables with its gondoliers, canals, casinos, sub-casinos and Venetian playgrounds. There was Hollywood-by-the-Sea—"a Hollywood," said its founders, "of canals, lagoons, and lakes, giving within the city limits alone seventy-five miles of waterway." There was Tivoli Gardens, of which the advertisements said: "As its name indicates, Tivoli Gardens draws its inspiration from old Italy. All architecture, landscaping, boulevarding, lighting, etc., will faithfully follow the Italian mode. Even the smart shops at the eastern end of the development are to be replicas of the Italian. In the centre of Tivoli Gardens, in a miniature garden of its own, is to be erected the Villa d'Este" —a fireproof hotel.

Where the process of re-creating in Florida the show-places and the garden-spots of Southern Europe found its perfect flower no two promotion experts would agree. Perhaps at Coral Cables. Perhaps at Miami Beach. Perhaps at Boca Raton —Boca Raton, "on the Camino Real—a really royal highway—paved throughout—jewelled with

lagoons—festooned with tropical foliage—fashioned after Rio de Janeiro's Botafogo, the most fascinating thoroughfare in all the world." It was here, said the architects, that "the world of international wealth that dominates finance and industry—the world of international society that sets fashions and sanctions customs—will find its new capital. Boca Raton *is* because the world of large affairs, smart society, and leisured ease has need of a new resort such as Boca Raton is to be."

A new world arose in Florida—a world of fronds and palms and palaces, of Moorish shops, Italian streets, Castilian clubs and Neapolitan ice cream.

§

The sensational development of Florida's most famous booms is sometimes supposed to constitute a unique chapter in the history of America, but we are unobserving if we do not recognize that this same transformation of the plain into the spectacular is now in progress in many sections of the country. Florida may lead the way. But the vogue for Old World architecture, the borrowing of distant and romantic names, the development of new real estate by making it above all else exotic, and the serious business of importing Europe piece by piece and stone by stone, are all

present-day characteristics of an industrious nation.

There is Mariemont, for instance. Mariemont is a long way from the poinsettia blossoms and the coral strands. Its trees are not royal palms but horse-chestnuts. Mariemont is a suburb of Cincinnati, on the banks of the Ohio, not the Gulf Stream. Yet far away as it is from the east coast, securely put as it is in the centre of the Middle West, remote as it is from cultural contact either with northern Italy or southern England, one reads of Mariemont that workmen are busy on the building of "lagoons," that the first of six "typical Norman English cottages" has been built by the owner of the Mariemont Delicatessen, and that "craftsmen are busy laying the stone shingle roof on the Memorial Church imported from England, this being the third time these shingles were laid upon a roof. The first laying was in the year 930 A.D. and the next in 1320 A.D., and the third in 1927."

Open the Sunday papers of thirty widely scattered cities. Turn to the Real Estate Sections; and if you do not find the announcement of a project which will bring more gondoliers from Venice for more new lagoons, you will find that a new Petit Trianon is rising on the Wabash or that another Ponte Vecchio is bridging an Arno far

from the Tuscan hills. It is not always possible to borrow a roof from an old cathedral or build a network of canals. But at least it is possible to borrow names. And so real is this zest to bring something of the Old World to the New that there is no important city in the country which lacks suburbs with a Continental flavour. Start with the innumerable Spanish suburbs of Los Angeles—go east to Venetian Gardens on the edge of New Orleans—north to Palos-in-the-Hills, Chicago—and east to the new American Venice, sixty-three minutes from Times Square, New York—and there are bits of Southern Europe scattered all the way.

It is at American Venice that "stately pillars topped with carven griffins guard the entrance"; that "fifty Spanish Villas" are in process of construction; that "the Grand Canal is finished" and the gas-pipes laid; that "arrangements have been completed for the laying of the corner stone of the first bridge, a replica of the famous Della Paglia bridge at Venice"; and that "the whole scene recalls the ancient City of the Doges, only more charming—and more 'homelike.'" . . . "To live at American Venice," say the advertisements, "is to quaff the very Wine of Life. . . . A turquoise lagoon under an aquamarine sky! Lazy gondolas! Beautiful Italian gardens! . . . The

Great Lagoon. . . . The Old World bridges. . . . And, ever present, the waters of the Great South Bay lapping lazily all the day upon a beach as white and fine as the soul of a little child."

§

Not all suburbs have a beach like this. Not all suburbs have a terrain that lends itself easily to developments as elaborate as the planning of whole foreign cities, the dredging of canals and the reproduction of the Bridge of Sighs. But even where such improvements are impractical, even where it is difficult to give free rein to the imagination and where it is necessary to build upon more modest plans, there is no mistaking the effect upon contemporary American architecture of this new wish of ours to house ourselves in something reminiscent of a distant and romantic land. To be rowed home from the office in a gondola may be for most of us a distant dream. To find a home in some new colony that entirely rebuilds a bit of Spain may be expensive. But there is always one's own house; and wherever it stands, and whatever it costs, it can go Spanish if it wants to.

Count the haciendas when you tour the suburbs. Count the stucco walls. How many streets are there left in the United States to-day, however far from Florida or however far from Spain, without

at least one patio, one adobe wall left rough with trowel-marks, and one cactus, real or artificial, propped against a Spanish grille? The rise of Spanish architecture is phenomenal. Introduced into this country at the Chicago Fair, it languished for some years; then found a congenial comrade on the west coast in the mission style of California. On the west coast it stayed, flowering here and there into a church, a home, or a hotel, until suddenly, within the last few years, on the crest of this new enthusiasm for romantic real estate, it swept the country.

Haciendas began rising under buckeye trees on land as flat and unlike the foothills of the Sierra Morena Mountains as Columbus, Ohio, is unlike Seville. New and strange colours began making their appearance in suburban streets: sunburned pinks, overcoat browns, smelling-salt greens and sliced-banana yellows. The household magazines began bulging with Spanish advertisements offering Spanish hinges, Spanish lanterns, built-in Spanish fireboxes, built-out Spanish balconies, Spanish plaster, Spanish tile, Spanish casement windows, Spanish awnings, Spanish glass and Spanish jugs to sit on Spanish floors at Spanish wells. "Homebuilders are turning to those unique effects in stucco with warm subtle colours and gentle textures which impart the feeling of true

Spanish hospitality," says an advertisement of the California Stucco Company. "Over the whole country Spanish architecture has cast its spell."

How real a spell may be guessed from the columns of real estate advertising announcing Spanish houses, Spanish villas, and Spanish bungalows for sale. Freeman Homes, Inc., announce in the New York *Times* that they have "bought an entire block on Granada Place" at Biltmore Shores and are starting operations on fifty Spanish bungalows at once. Tracy, Pearl & Co. announce in the New York *World* on the same day that they are building two hundred Spanish villas on Long Island.

The business of importing Spain has made such progress that even the conservative house of Sears, Roebuck & Company—creators of homes that come all sawed and ready to be nailed together—has fallen into line. To their standard list of American types, one hundred per cent. conglomerate from roof to cellar, Sears, Roebuck & Company have added two homes that are distinctly Spanish: the "Del Rey" and the "Alhambra." Both have bright red roofs and low Castilian arches and breathe Spain through every stucco pore.

§

If Spain leads the way, Italy is a close second. If there had been no Padua, no Florence, and no

Venice, Florida would not be the place it is to-day. Neither would suburban Cleveland. Neither would the suburban district of any other prosperous and progressive city. Villas that would do justice to the Piazza Barberini are rising far from Rome. Bright orchid and pale salmon walls begin to line new roads as rapidly as the construction of new golf links paves the way into the wilderness for the creation of new suburbs. Half of our newest hotels and theatres have Italian lobbies, and half of our country clubs have gone Italian altogether. There are reproductions of the Ca d'Oro in cities seven hundred miles from water, and faithful attempts to bring the Villa Medici to cities where only the ice-man and the fruit-man speak Italian.

Nor are we partial only to Old World architecture. We go in for Old World wood and stone. It is good if the living room is an exact replica of the reception hall of the Alcazar, but it is even better if the concrete beams are glazed and stained and bored with gimlet holes and pounded with a hammer till they reproduce an oak so aged and so worm-gnawed that it seems about to fall.

"It is a strange fact," says Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, in his *American Spirit in Architecture*, "that at a time when there is a variety of possible building materials never before obtainable, when

sheet metal and drawn metal and wood fibre and rubber and an enormous number of different kinds of brick and stone and plaster, and a thousand other products of mechanical invention and chemical research have been put to use as building materials, each new material crying aloud, it would seem, for a new treatment suitable to it, each new invention a new opportunity for the artist—it is a strange fact that our love for texture and materials has forced us to make all of this newness merely fraudulent imitations of the old. So rubber is marbleized, wood-fibre boards are nailed on a wall in stone ashlar patterns, and there is 'stone' cast in molds, 'stone' baked in ovens, 'stone' put on with a trowel, and we even sometimes torture the loveliness of wood shingles into the exaggerated curves of a futile imitation of thatch."

Nor is this all. When we have turned our rubber into marble, our plaster into stone, and our sheet-steel into rosewood, when we have filled our suburbs with haciendas and our parks with villas, when we have set aside whole areas to be ploughed up with lagoons, we nail up new street-signs. For our streets are going foreign with our houses, and addresses borrowed from Madrid and Rome are as stylish as pink walls.

Gone is the old practice of naming thorough-

fares exclusively for presidents, generals, battles, trees, and birds. To-day we write into our directories the same romantic note that dominates our building plans. Main Street is still Main Street, but the new road out beyond the Fair Grounds on the edge of town is Santa Barbara Avenue. Even in an old city like New York there suddenly appear new streets like Santa Maria Place, Montefiore Road, Bon Air Park, Lorenzo Avenue, San Marco Place, Ponce de Leon Road, Bella Vista Road, and Vista Terrace—substitutes, all these and many more, for the stay-at-homes who cannot go to Florida each winter.

As for the whole-heartedly romantic booms like American Venice on Long Island—here every signpost comes from Baedeker; Granada Avenue, Canal Grande, Alhambra Road, Laguna San Marco, Piave Terrace, and Canal Lugano.

"Home, James. Corner of Piave Terrace and Alhambra Road. Send the gondola for Mrs. Jones."

§

We have been a busy people, and for many years we did not stop to think a great deal of the esthetics of the things we built, as the older sections of our newer cities testify. We built for service, not for art; and if beauty came as an

afterthought we achieved it with a few more eaves, an extra porch, some scalloped cornices, a bit of stained glass in the bathroom or a bevy of bay windows.

Now, in a day when we have more vision and a surer grasp upon our destiny, we look to our real estate for something more than mere utility. The vogue for foreign travel has familiarized us with the inexpensive luxuries of Europe. The vogue for Sabatini and Ibañez has helped to bring us Spain. The vogue for the movies has brought us new ideas of what constitutes a happy and successful home. It is to the movies, probably, that we owe in large degree the popularity of the iron grille, the bronze torchère, the boxwood trees on the front doorstep, and the recrudescence of the bell-pull.

Here we are, pursuing romance, giving our booms Italian names, filling our drives with haciendas, filling our homes with candelabra, naming our streets to sound like Venice, building our verandas to look like cloisters, tinting our steel to look like walnut, laying our bricks to look like tile, mixing our paints to look like colours that were thoroughly faded by the time of Isabella, going to Verona for our loggias and refuting the charge that we like only what is "useful" by building ourselves whole hosts of things that plainly serve no purpose: Italian wells that pump

no water, Moorish grilles for second-story windows, and Spanish balconies for houses with no rooms upstairs.

We do this with one reservation: there will be no surrender on the bath-tubs. We are building for charm plus comfort, not for charm alone. There will be no surrender on the oil-burning furnaces, on the hot-water heating, on the electric dish-washers, on the electric clothes-scrubbers or on the electric ice-machines. But if all these things can be satisfactorily encased in an exterior that looks as if it had been lifted bodily from the Côte d'Azur, so much the better. In this case give us another slice of the Riviera, another town or two of northern Italy, and another chunk of central Spain.

Somewhere on an old Kearns farm that has now become an Española Terrace Gardens the ideal American residence will rise some day. It will borrow its porch from Pisa, its roof from Naples, its chimneys from Granada, and its bird-houses from the steeples of Cadiz. And over the fireplace in the pleasant Florentine living-room that looks out across the patio will be the adage: Be it ever so Latin, there's no place like home.

BUSINESS DISCOVERS BATHING BEAUTY

CHAPTER X

BUSINESS DISCOVERS BATHING BEAUTY

AT HALF-PAST eleven in the morning "The Beauty Special" rolls into Atlantic City bearing seventy-five of America's fairest flowers. Guns boom. Whistles blow. The nation's annual bathing beauty contest is beginning. Three Governors are at the railway station. Airplanes circle overhead. A band plays the "Star-Spangled Banner." The occasion has been considered important enough in recent years for the United States Navy to send the dirigible, *Los Angeles*.

This is the Wednesday following Labor Day. Keys to the city are presented to the seventy-five beauties as they leave their train. A jubilee flag is raised at the corner of the Boardwalk and Indiana Avenue. Pictures are posed in the afternoon. At night the Rotary Club of Atlantic City gives a dinner, with a few remarks made by its president. Unfortunately, he says, only one "Miss America" can be chosen in the contest which is now about to start, but in a bigger and broader

and finer sense each of the young ladies present is a "Miss America," in that she represents the highest ideals of the nation. General applause.

This is Wednesday. On the following morning, after due deliberation as to whether bare legs or legs in chiffon are more interesting to gentlemen in middle age, the seventy-five contestants for the title put on one-piece bathing suits and go to the Central High School where the judging starts. It is no use to make a toilet. "Cosmetics, picked or shaved eyebrows and other means of enhancing natural good looks count unfavourably," says the Associated Press. In one corner of the mathematics room the judges consider the merits of each candidate as she parades before the blackboards. "Miss Rochester" goes out. Her teeth are fine, but this is not a contest in fine teeth. "Miss Portland" drops. She is a very nice young lady but she has square knees. Fifteen girls are left when the morning ends. In the afternoon comes the Boardwalk procession and the fifteen girls are reduced to five.

The next day, Friday, is the day of days. The five girls still in the running go to the High School building in the morning, back in their bathing suits again. The five, this time, are reduced to two, but the result is kept a secret. The judges vote upon these two and seal their ballots in a golden

apple. There follows an anxious afternoon. At eight in the evening the whole cortège reassembles on the Million Dollar Pier. Trumpets blow. The golden apple is broken open. The ballots are counted. And amid the blare of bands, the roll of drums, the popping of flashlights and the cheers of fifteen thousand people a crown is placed on the blonde head of "Miss West Philadelphia" and America has a reigning queen of beauty for another year.

She had never expected it, she says, it was the last thing in the world she'd thought of, yes her mother had always made her drink milk and go to Sunday School when she was a little girl and for another year she'll try to carry her new title with the dignity it deserves.

The show is over. Next morning the seventy-five bathing beauties do what they have not been able to do before, on account of the curl in their hair and the fear of getting sunburned. They go swimming.

§

This is the rite of choosing an American queen of bathing beauty as it is now practised at Atlantic City every summer, and one does not need to be either a connoisseur of beauty or a spectator to the event to realize that it is rapidly becoming a

landmark of some importance in the contemporary scene.

Entries come from all parts of the country: from cities as far apart as Pittsfield, Miami, and Spokane, cities as large as Chicago and New York and as small as Hammond and Elizabeth, cities as different as Wilkes-Barre, Boston, and Biloxi. And the choosing of each local favourite in these cities has become, meantime, an affair which calls for a considerable show of civic interest. When "Miss Bronx" was chosen to represent her borough of New York in the contest of 1927, a parade of thirty thousand people marched down the Grand Concourse behind the beauties on their floats, with the Mayor of the city at the head of the procession and the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the ten surviving members of the G. A. R. residing in the Bronx all represented.

Nor is this all. Bathing beauties are not news of the moment only: the press carries bathing beauty news the year around. There are reports of litigation in the courts to determine the legitimacy of titles, reports of the presence of the reigning queen of beauty at the dedication of memorials, reports of the impressive incomes earned in stage salaries, fees for public appearances and pay for testimonials. Both the "Miss America" of 1925

and the "Miss America" of 1926 are said to have earned $50,000 while they wore the ermine. On the sixth day of her reign the present "Miss America" signed a contract with the Great States Theatre Corporation and the Publix Theatres, assuring her of a minimum salary of $26,000 and a possible maximum of $75,000 for her stage appearances during the season 1927–1928.

Certainly all this is the reflection of an interest by no means confined to a few stray groups or a few odd corners of the country. Like the vogue for the Italian villa, the super-college, and the drug-store bar, the bathing beauty contest is a phenomenon of our own times, in its own way giving us something new to think about. Nor is it strange that with newspapers in seventy-five cities busily recruiting candidates, mayors jumping at the chance to lead processions, cities pitted against one another in the headlines, the Federal Government sending its one and only dirigible for the occasion, and minor contests in emulation of that at Atlantic City springing up all over the country, voices are raised in dispute as to what these well-trumpeted displays of girlish beauty wrapped in a wisp of cloth are really worth and what they are contributing to the riches of the nation.

On one side there is the voice of protest. The Philadelphia Federation of Women's Clubs adopts

a resolution declaring that "the demoralizing effect of the Atlantic City Beach Parade is an established fact." The National Council of Catholic Women condemns the beauty contest as "exploitation of feminine pulchritude" and "a backward step in the civilization of the world." A convention of the Southern Baptist Church, meeting in Houston, Texas, denounces the whole theory of such displays as "evil and evil only," tending to "lower true and genuine respect for womanhood."

On the other side the gentlemen who run the contest at Atlantic City insist that their motives are as esthetic as they are disinterested. The purpose of this contest, says the preamble to its book of rules, is "to develop a higher appreciation of the beautiful in young womanhood by the American public." Admittedly the costumes worn are short and clinging to the flesh, but not shorter or more clinging than those worn in the surf, if somewhat more compellingly displayed. Admittedly the crowds howl and the girls blush and the barber-shops pick up the pictures. But these girls are beautiful girls, and deserve their welcome.

Moreover, the contest committee at Atlantic City is careful to disbar from the competition (see eligibility rules nos. 1 and 3) all those who are traditionally considered to be bad women in

America: not only "actresses and artist's models" but "widows and divorcees." The girls who are actually permitted to compete are as good as they are beautiful. "Miss New York" of 1927 plays the piano and likes the classics. "Miss Washington" is an excellent cook and poses for the Sunday papers peeling potatoes in her kitchen. Our reigning "Miss America" herself has gone on the stage, but only "because she possesses the title," says her mother, in an interview with the New York *Herald-Tribune*, "and because she must do honour to it and fulfill her duty to the country."

§

So runs the dispute over these lively contests which now throw a bright new beam of light upon the American scene, and we can take our choice between the theory that they are the work of the devil and the theory that they are a fine thing for the nation's art. We shall miss something, however, if we stop with this. For the significance of the bathing beauty contest is limited neither to the nation's morals nor the nation's art. It has other possibilities, and among them are matters of increasing interest to the nation's business.

Business, in fact, has taken the leadership at Atlantic City. It is no secret that this annual contest is profitable to the seaboard of New

Jersey. It begins on the Wednesday following Labor Day, which is about the time when summer visitors are going home. Rather than miss this display of innocence many of them stay. One hundred thousand visitors is the average estimate of the number of people who remain in Atlantic City for the four days of the carnival, and at the low estimate of ten dollars spent per day per person this means four million dollars.

The importance of this arithmetic is well understood in Atlantic City. Witness the fact that the contest is not held under the auspices of a few local fanciers of art, but under the auspices of the Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce. Witness the fact that the organization which sponsors the fête is composed not of a few concessionaires along the beach, but of representatives of the trolley interests, the real estate companies, the storage houses and the banks. Every detail is arranged to contribute its quota to the resources of the city. Rule No. 7, for example, requires that "each contestant shall stay at the hotel designated for her by the committee." Beauty is parcelled out among the lobbies.

All this is good business. But it is by no means business confined merely to Atlantic City. The idea is gaining ground that commerce and industry generally have something to learn from this

annual display of beauty. There is a new trend toward practical realization of this theory, and we are not doing justice to one of the younger tendencies in business if we overlook it. For example:

The National Hosiery and Underwear Association meets in New York for its annual convention and stages a beauty contest at the Hotel Waldorf. The announced purpose of this contest is the discovery of "the ideal American ankle." To achieve this purpose committees of hosiery men in forty-two cities have been measuring the ankles of eight hundred girls over a period of several weeks. Nineteen girls appear at the Waldorf for the finals. Four artists act as judges. The nineteen girls parade. The hosiery men look on. After more measuring Miss Gladys Turner is declared the winner. Miss Turner receives $500 and a silver cup. It is announced that a cast of her ankle will be made by Pompeo Coppino, graduate of the Academy of Arts in Florence and sculptor of the General Sam Houston Memorial in Texas. For a year this cast will serve as the standard model for stocking manufacturers throughout the United States. And for a year Miss Turner will reign as "Queen of Hosiery" wherever hosiery is made.

Meantime, meeting at Tulsa, Oklahoma, the

National Oil and Gas men choose a "Queen Petrolia." The automobile men open the Brooklyn Motor Show by choosing a "Queen of Transportation." The National Hair Dressers' Association, meeting in Cleveland, chooses a "Queen of Styles Creations." The first act of the Radio Jubilee when it opens in New York is to choose a "Queen of Radio." The health-and-fresh-air press of the nation meets at Atlantic City to choose a "Queen of Physical Culture." A committee of Southern business men meets annually to choose a "Queen of the Universe" at Galveston.

So real is the progress made by this idea that it has even reached one of the professional groups: the chiropractors. And logically enough, if the hosiery men go in for ankles and the fresh-air press goes in for physical culture, the chiropractors have gone in for backs. At the last annual convention of the Progressive Chiropractors' Association in Los Angeles three hundred and fifty candidates for the honour of possessing the most beautiful back in the United States appeared before a committee of chiropractic experts and lined up before the cameras. Miss Virginia Parent won the prize and was declared to have an almost perfect spine. No title was awarded. But the rotogravure sections of the press were filled with almost perfect spines for several weeks.

For the press, too, shares in the benefits accruing from this quickened interest. And the same process which has given the stocking trade a Queen of Hosiery has provided the press with a pony chorus for its editorials.

§

What we have here is emphasis upon youth, beauty, and the one-piece bathing suit, adapted to the needs of industry and commerce. It is a new tendency and it has made its appearance only here and there in the wide range of American business. But it is a young tendency, it is thoroughly up-to-date, and there is some evidence that business generally looks on it with favour. For no one who studies the advertising pages through which the voice of business speaks can fail to be impressed with the fact that the bathing beauty is becoming more and more the handmaid of American industry, if not in the flesh at least on paper.

Styles have changed, the advertising pages are no longer what they used to be, and the day is gone when the only proper way to announce a new model of a motor car is to print a diagram of the engine and a bill of particulars as to piston displacement and ignition. The modern way to announce a new model of a motor car is to print

a picture of it with two bathing beauties climbing into the back seat from the running board. The modern way to advertise a set of wicker furniture is not to print a picture of two wicker rockers and a table, but to print a picture of three bathing beauties caught on the terrace of a sheltered pool, waiting for the butler to serve tea.

This is a new day, and the advertising pages have ceased to be a mere album of things which can be purchased—a portfolio of stoves and dishpans, needlework and linen, hardware and upholstery—and acquired some of the glamour of the Winter Garden. From the sheer emphasis on black chiffon it is difficult to tell, in many instances, whether the young lady who has disrobed before the camera has consented to do so in behalf of stockings, garters, underwear, shoes, the rug on which she stands, the pillow at her feet, the chair on which she leans, the bracelets on her arms, or the grand piano in the background. Only close examination of the floor beneath the rug may reveal the fact that this is a floor advertisement, not a Follies poster, and that the message which this picture carries is the good news of a wax that will not scuff with wear or blister with hot coffee.

One thing is certain. A new theme is being introduced into the technique of commercial art,

and the business of selling shoes and clothes and household goods has acquired a new method. What is a dye that will not fade without somebody in a bathing suit to test it? What is a copper pipe that will not leak, a window screen that will not rust, or a laundry soap that will not streak, without somebody fresh from the seashore to admire it?

Guns boom. Whistles blow. And while three Governors wait at the railway station in Atlantic City for the Beauty Special, the advertising pages of the nation's press have begun to bloom with bathing girls in the furniture advertisements lounging on luxurious sofas, bathing girls in the cold cream advertisements defying sunburn on the beaches, and bathing girls in the railway advertisements personifying the spirit of promptness, courtesy, and service.

Call this commercialism, if you like. Call it an attempt to appropriate charm for a soap or a sofa or a sport coupé by associating it with the symmetry of perfect form. But for years critics of the American system have been bewailing the fact that American utilitarianism is divorced from art. We have turned a corner.

Business has discovered beauty.

GANGWAY

CHAPTER XI

GANGWAY

FIVE hundred thousand Americans now tour Europe every summer. This is a movement of people comparable with the shifting of whole populations in the Middle Ages, a sudden concerted drive upon a few favourite objectives beside which the pace of the Klondike gold rush seems lethargic. The advance guard sails in early May. The rear guard is still mopping up the last few bathing beaches and casinos in September. With high hopes of a falling franc and a determination to be open-minded about art, a due sense of the historical importance of the Old World and enough French to get them from Napoleon's Tomb to the Gare de Lyons via the Bastille and the Folies Bergères, a half million Americans invade the continent of Europe.

Figures soaring into hundreds of millions of dollars for summer tours no longer awe us. We are used to hearing it said that Americans now spend twice as much "doing Europe" every year

as Europe pays on its American debts, and when we read that the railway tickets, the hotel bills, and the cover charges of Americans abroad now correct half the adverse trade balance of Italy and contribute a third of a billion dollars to the coffers of the French Republic, we take the fact for granted. For all of us, even if we are not voyagers ourselves, have had mute evidence of the over-running of an alien continent before the summer ends, in an avalanche of postcard pictures of the Matterhorn, the Jungfrau, Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, and the Lion of Lucerne.

Touring Europe is no longer an adventure for the rich alone. It is no longer an adventure solely for the cultured. The great armada that sails east from the Atlantic seaboard every summer numbers among its hosts more people of modest means than people of large incomes, more storekeepers and retired squires from Nebraska than celebrities from Broadway and Park Avenue, more Americans who intend to honour Lafayette than propose to try their luck at Deauville or take the cure at Karlsbad.

This summer hegira across three thousand miles of open water is now established as an American institution as popular, as widely shared, and as

characteristic of our own times as the round-trip outing to Niagara in the nineties.

§

The explanations of this annual excursion of Americans by the half million, as stated in the guide-books and the steamship folders, are logical but not entirely convincing.

It is said that we go abroad for the purpose of knowing Europe better; that we wish to understand what France thinks and why, how Germany is faring as a republic, and what is happening in Italy. This may be true. But it is worth noting that those who set out upon such pilgrimages seldom choose to isolate themselves in quarters where they might strike up acquaintanceships with Frenchmen and discover, for example, "what France thinks." They prefer, instead, to remain within easy striking distance of comfortable hotels and agreeable cafés so honeycombed with other travellers that it is the work of years to discover what anyone except their fellow tourists thinks of anything.

It is said, again, that we go abroad to escape from Prohibition. But there are more of us who make a virtue of our Prohibition, when we go abroad, than the tales told on returning liners

would suggest. And for the rest of us there are provinces nearer home than Europe that have no Volstead Acts.

It is also said that we go abroad because we are epicures and yearn for foreign cooking. But whatever yearning exists within us, on the score of cooking, is plainly yearning on the other side. Meats smothered artistically in garlic, berries served with sour cream, and hors d'œuvres in their more exotic forms may be all right for people who are used to them. But let an American in Glasgow, Naples, Prague, or Venice hear of a restaurant called "Uncle Sam," and he will sacrifice three art collections, walk a mile, and pay a dollar for a pot of baked beans and a bona-fide slice of pie.

There is also the theory that we go abroad "to rest." But this theory falls still wider of the mark. For we do not rest in Europe. A few of us there may be who pick out quiet places on the coast of Brittany or Devonshire and settle down to spend a summer in a background of mere atmosphere. But for the vast majority of Americans abroad, a summer in Europe means one long, spirited, and uninterrupted struggle against a relentless and sardonic Fate, rescuing trunks from baggage agents who care nothing about trunks, quarrelling over schedules and cathedrals, wiring ahead for

reservations and behind for baggage left in check-rooms, racing fellow-countrymen for the best seats on observation trains, buying complicated railway tickets in complicated foreign languages, convincing skeptical customs agents that there is nothing hidden in their collar-bags, trying to do something about their coffee in the morning and worrying whether they are missing any sights which will be held against them when they get back home.

Fifty-five minutes in Antwerp—ten minutes from the railway station to the Cathedral, fourteen minutes in the Cathedral for Rubens's Descent from the Cross and six for the Elevation, ten minutes back to the railway station, five minutes for the nearest approach to a ham sandwich that can be had in a somewhat God-forsaken country, and ten minutes' leeway to catch the next train for Holland—this is a rather ample allowance for northeastern Belgium.

The publisher of the Wichita *Daily Eagle* who sailed for Europe recently with the announcement that he intended to "do" eight countries in a month—"My object is to test the practicality of seeing Europe by airplane in four weeks"—was only a little more ambitious than his average fellow-tourist.

Once abroad, we do not "rest." We play

steam locomotive up and down the continent of Europe.

§

There is one other theory frequently suggested: that we go abroad to see the sights.

This is a more convincing explanation than the theory that we go abroad to rest, for at least we do see sights. One hundred thousand guide-books are sold in this country in advance of every tourist season, and there is not an art gallery in Paris, not a dungeon in Lombardy, nor a baptistery in Rome, a battle-field in Flanders, a glass factory in Venice, or a grotto in the Ardennes, which, by the summer's end, has not had its inspection by a posse of Americans coming to decide whether, all things considered, it really measures up to expectations.

All over Europe, all summer long, there are Americans checking the walls of the Uffizi Palace against the double stars in Baedeker, chipping bits of mosaic from the Baths of Caracalla, yodelling at Lauterbrunnen for the echo and pacing the basilica of St. Peter's to make sure that it is one hundred and five feet longer than St. Paul's. We are especially interested in heroes and the homes of heroes and the ways of heroes, whether they are alive, like Foch, or dead, like Shakes-

peare. A quarter of a million Americans now pay tribute to Marie Antoinette on the spot where the guillotine beheaded her, the two young princes in the Tower are mourned by thousands every summer, and Clemenceau, late in his years, built a barbed-wire fence around his farm at St. Vincent in the Vendee.

Yet despite all this, and despite the reputation we have acquired all over Europe for missing nothing in the guide-books, it is doubtful whether sight-seeing for its own sake takes most of us abroad. For we are not such connoisseurs in history and such antiquarians in art as our methods of touring Europe would suggest.

The man who climbs the Leaning Tower of Pisa to see whether there are actually two hundred and ninety-five steps to the top of its seven-and-three-tenths-per-cent. angle of inclination is the same man who, living in New York, has always meant to go to the top of the Woolworth Building but never quite found time.

The man who lets himself be ferried two miles from Capri in an unsteady rowboat for the pleasures of a half hour in the Grotta Azzura, entered through a three-foot hole, is the same man who, living in Louisville, Kentucky, has always meant to visit Mammoth Cave but never managed to get there.

The man who jolts his way to Hampton Court on a Piccadilly bus, to see an old estate in perfect preservation, is the man who lives in Washington and has been meaning to drive out to Mt. Vernon on the first pleasant Sunday for the last nine years.

All things considered, it seems likely that the sight-seeing we do in Europe is incidental to the chief purpose of the trip, something well worth while inasmuch as we are over there, but not really the driving force that shakes average Americans from their moorings and sends them off to Europe by the hundred thousand every summer.

§

Why do we go to Europe? . . . Why do we go to Bridgeport? Why do we go to Portsmouth? Why do we go to Springfield? Why do we run up and down the country every Sunday in our motors? It has always been the custom of Americans to roam tirelessly over the broad face of a continent, and the inclusion of Europe in our line of march is only a natural widening of the orbit of our restlessness, due to a modernization of the means of travel.

We are tourists, and always have been tourists, by trade and by tradition. For many years the

trail led west, but our travels did not end with this. There were minor caravans of those who had left the main parade at points along the way, tried settling down, grown restless in their immobility and taken to the road again. The mass movement of Americans across open country to new and distant goals comes down to us, in our own times, in the sudden rush to Florida for real estate and the new stampede to California when another enterprising pioneer (an advertising man this time) struck sunshine.

It has always been part of the American tradition, and the inalienable right of every citizen, to ramble. It has always been the privilege of a Kansas lawyer to decide that he did not wish to be a Kansas lawyer any longer, and preferred to be a realtor in Arizona or to sell motor-car accessories in Charleston. The cities of this country have been filled with people changing jobs. The railway stations and the highways have swarmed with people off somewhere to have a look around.

It throws light on the annual American invasion of the continent of Europe to remember that our desire to go gadding is not something suddenly cultivated, but something in the blood.

Europe is to America in 1928 what the Kentucky hills were to America in the days of Daniel

Boone, and the Leviathan is the latest model of the covered wagon.

§

Here, for example, is a traveller, Jones by name, who is inspecting Europe for the first time on the grand circuit tour which takes him from Paris to Naples via the battle-fields, Marseilles, Monte Carlo, and Milan.

He has not been in France two days before he discovers to his amazement that Frenchmen are not Americans. He had expected them to speak a different language. That would be their privilege. What he had not entirely expected was that they should run their railways differently, that even their best trains should have no chair-cars, that even their best hotels should have no soap, that no drug store should sell postage stamps, that newspapers should print their news obscurely on an inside page and devote their outside pages to a baffling form of literary chit-chat, that theatre programs should be charged for, that ice water should be served without the slightest trace of ice, that despite its manifest inferiority all Frenchmen generally should regard their country as superior to the United States, and that it should never be 78 or 88 or 98 or any other understandable temperature in the shade or in the sun, but

always some unsatisfactory number, Centigrade.

And the result? Can we say that Jones is delighted by these and by a hundred other major and minor differences in point of view and way of doing things, which he detects as distinguishing Americans from Englishmen or Americans from Frenchmen or Americans from Swedes? Can we say that Jones returns from Europe overjoyed at having found things ordered otherwise than they are ordered here at home? Does he find this charming? He does not. He finds it shocking.

For it is the essence of Jones's adventure on the continent of Europe that he does not tour these alien lands as a detached, impersonal observer basking in the glow of new and strange experiences, but as the serious-minded friend of somewhat backward nations who does his best to propagate wholesome, up-to-date American ideas as he goes along. Jones deeply and sincerely deplores the fact that Frenchmen are not Americans, and is only too happy to do what he can to repair the damage, by pointing out to Frenchmen their misfortune. Half a million of his countrymen assist him, every summer, in this effort.

For Jones is not alone in his evangelical devotion to American ideas and his desire to foster these ideas in an alien soil. All over the Old World, from May to September, from Madrid to

Warsaw and the Bay of Naples to the Shetland Islands, there are Americans busy telling Europeans how to run their railways, how to cook their meals, how to police their cities, how to draft their tax bills, how to mark their street-cars, and how to substitute for mountain-climbing a man's-sized sport like baseball.

"Really, you people ought to have a few skyscrapers. Now in America we've found that land values rise directly in proportion to the number of people we can put in convenient contact with each other, provided, of course, you can get them there without congestion, which of course you people can't, because you have no subways, or none to speak of, and you don't know how to handle your surface traffic, and that's because your streets are wrong, all wrong, instead of running where they'll take you some place they run round in circles, and you've got too many private parks for rapid transit, probably because you've got too many earls and lords and kings living in big houses in the centre of your cities. Now the trouble with kings, if you don't mind my saying it . . ."

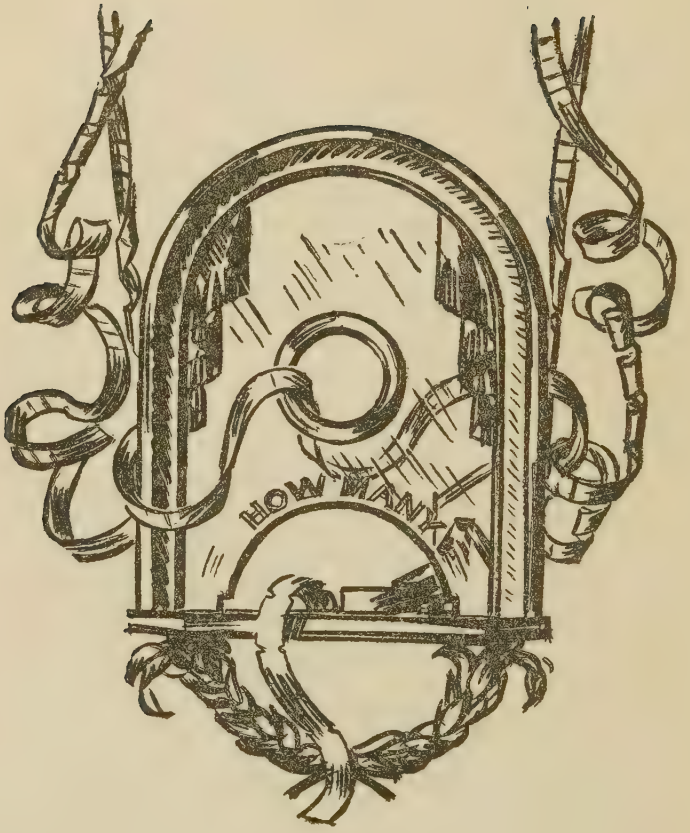
Well, why not? This is not mere braggadocio; it is sincere conviction. This is not Falstaff; it is Daniel Boone. For we are pioneers by instinct and by training. This is virgin soil. We itch to

annex Europe, know we can't, and so, for lack of force, fall back upon persuasion.

Not merely for an Alpine valley or the stained glass of a French cathedral do we go abroad. These may be the motives we confide to friends. They are not the motives which have worn ruts in a thousand western trails and now cut furrows in the ocean.

Gangway. . . . The harbour churns as a long black hulk backs warily upstream. The tugs along her sides let go. Flags leap out in a fresh west breeze. A siren blows. . . . Some more Americans are off for Europe.

THE SILVER SCREEN


HOW MANY

CHAPTER XII

THE SILVER SCREEN

TWENTY million Americans go to the movies every day. This fact is vouched for by the unimpeachable Mr. Hays reporting to the President. One American in every six, in other words, now finds time to visit the movies not once a month or once a week, but once a day. Such is the hold of the movies on their public. And even if it be assumed that Mr. Hays is making the most of his statistics he cannot be far wrong. For the presence of the movies is all around us in our modern world, filling our lives with a new elegance and romance, creating new values for millions of delighted people and lining our streets with theatres whose bright lights wink the names of fabulously paid heroines, now playing "Desert Love," "The Desert Lover," "Desert Passion," "Desert Lust," and "Passion in the Desert."

Columns of impressive figures pay tribute to the movies. The business of making celluloid dramas now ranks with steel and motor cars among the ten great industries in the United

States. Its invested capital, says the Film Year Book of 1927, is a billion and a half. Another billion comes in annually from the sale of tickets at twenty thousand theatres. Two hundred and thirty-five thousand people are employed at the production studios. One hundred and fifty million dollars is spent each year upon new pictures. Eight hundred feature films were made last year, in addition to twenty thousand shorter pictures and several million feet of news reels. Twenty-five thousand miles of film are handled daily at the film exchanges. And the export of American films abroad, amounting in 1923 to thirty million feet a year, now aggregates two hundred and fifty million.

These are mighty figures. Consider the results. "The moving picture," Mr. Hays declares, "has carried the silent call of honesty, ambition, virtue, patriotism, hope, love of country and of home to audiences speaking fifty different languages. . . . It has brought to narrow lives a knowledge of the wide, wide world. . . . It has clothed the empty existence of far-off hamlets with joy. . . . It has lifted listless labouring folk till they have walked the peaks of romance and adventure. . . . It has been the benefactor of uncounted millions."

It is not strange, with so many millions and billions, that the movies have begun to acquire a

certain awe for the men who make them, and even a religious touch. Witness the naming of three of the newest moving picture houses in New York. One of them, Roxy's Theatre, is "The Cathedral of the Motion Picture." Another, the Fifty-Fifth Street Theatre, is "The Sanctuary of the Cinema." And the third, the Capitol, is "The Theatre with a Soul."

§

The process by which the movies are made and the silent call of honesty, ambition, virtue, patriotism, hope, love of country and of home is now carried to people speaking fifty different languages, has been described for us so often and in so many graphic chapters that we are familiar with its chief details.

At one end of the arena where the newest panoramic film is being made sits the director: salary slightly less than that of the leading lady in the picture, but twice as large as that of the President of the United States. He wears a golf suit. On his lap is a megaphone, at his ears a pair of telephone receivers, his cap is turned with the visor to the back, in one hand is a manuscript, in the other hand a cigar which he chews but does not smoke; at his left is a corps of assistant directors and his camera-men, at his right a battery

of electric dials by means of which, at the proper moment, he will start the wind-machines, signal for the artificial rain, send the Indians on their sortie down the canyon, inform the United States Cavalry that the moment for a rescue is impending, and if this is really a super-film send fifty wild-eyed oxen over a cliff to their destruction.

Meantime, waiting for the cue that will bring her to the burning cabin with the rescue party, the heroine of the play is resting near at hand, seated, as all of us know who even so much as glance at the Sunday rotogravure sections, in a camp-chair labelled with her name and intended at no time to be occupied by any other person. She is a new find and an expensive one. Her salary is several hundred thousand. Her father is a Spaniard. Her mother is a Greek. She has sex appeal. Her husband is a count. She has been instructed in the action which is to take place in the forthcoming scene, and because it is a sad one has her private violinist playing Grieg.

Other details are unforgettable. There is the leading man who insists upon riding his own wild horse and declines to deceive his loyal fans by permitting a substitute to risk his neck for him, even in the scene in which he is to be shot squarely

from the saddle. There is the villain who confides to interviewers for the moving picture magazines that he dislikes playing rôles that tend to lower the moral tone of his performance, but has no alternative under the terms of a hard-hearted contract. There is the author of the novel from which the story has been taken, watching patiently from the side-lines in the hope of seeing something he can recognize before the film is finished.

Hollywood, in all its detail, bustle, and magnificence, has been reproduced for us, as Hollywood itself would say, by countless millions of reporters; and there is not a shoe-clerk in a city store, a farm-hand on the prairies, or a sailor on the bounding deep who does not know its high spots.

All of us know what Kleig lights are and that privation akin to real suffering is sometimes encountered "on location."

All of us know that it costs at least a million dollars to make a super-picture, that if it is necessary to sink a battleship a battleship is sunk, and that no imaginative director hesitates to import a French château, a Hindu saint, a family of Hottentots, or a whole tribe of Eskimos if it is local colour he is after.

All of us know that the celebrities of the motion picture live in palaces, that it is indispensable to their health for them to be surrounded by every comfort, and to their social position for them to own either a hacienda, an echo organ, or a thirty-by-sixty swimming pool, but that under the surface of a necessary show of pomp they lead simple, democratic lives.

What these people do in Hollywood, what they wear and what they eat and how many times a week they entertain at dinner and which of them has the largest bathing bungalow at Santa Monica, all this is news—and millions of people scattered over a broad country watch with unabated interest for word of their love affairs, their latest pictures, and their family quarrels.

In the bright light of a publicity which is well-nigh blinding new gods walk Mt. Olympus.

§

Various explanations have been offered for the triumph which the movies have achieved. It is said that they inject into dull lives a note of distant romance, that they offer an outlet for suppressed emotions in a land of make-believe, that there is a reassuring and poetic justice in the certainty with which a poor man who is honest ends up rich, that nowhere else is sex so ingeniously

and successfully exploited, that here is the perfect tribute to Old Glory, home, and mother, and that the movies cover an enormous amount of territory in a remarkably short space of time, which appeals instinctively to a tourist nation.

These are all good theories, as anyone who has just come home from six reels of "Desert Love" or "Hearts Aflame" will testify. What all of them suggest, essentially, is that the movies have romanticized life; and except for a stray picture here and there, unquestionably this is true. But the movies have done more than this. They have not only romanticized life; they have given it simplicity and order.

For behind the romance of the movies and the great directors and the palaces of the stars and the hodge-podge of Arab sheiks and Oriental dancers, Russian dukes and million-dollar budgets thrust into the foreground by an ambitious program of production, there is constantly in progress an attempt to state life in as simple terms as possible. It may be true that the Roman Coliseum has been rebuilt in Hollywood at a cost of seven hundred thousand dollars, that one hundred lions and two hundred Christians and three hundred Nubian soldiers and five thousand Roman spectators will take part in the great crucifixion scene; but all this is incidental to the fact that in the last

analysis the boy (Caius Romulus Remus) will get the girl (Flavia Aurelia Cinna) and, thanks to the repentance of his uncle (Nero), get the money.

All primary things are reduced to manageable units in the movies. Human nature itself has been subdivided, catalogued, and card-indexed. When the new candidate for the movies reaches Hollywood he applies at the Central Casting Bureau for an opening. The Casting Bureau looks him over, decides where he belongs, and registers him in one of forty-seven categories. Alphabetically, the list begins with Acrobats, Bald-heads, Bellhops, Beards, Butlers, Character-Elderly, and Chinese; runs on through Cowboys, Dancers, Gamblers, Gendarmes, Heavies, Juveniles, and Long-Haired; and winds up with Short, Stunt, Swimmers, Toothless, Uniform, and Waiters.

If the candidate is a girl there are twenty-eight types under which she may be listed instead of forty-seven, as for men; for women, if more changeable, are apparently less varied; and there is no demand for lady Dope-fiends, Make-ups, Mexicans, Midgets, and Musicians, all of which categories appear upon the list for men. The list for women starts with Blonde, runs on through Coloured and Comedienne, and winds up with Underworld.

The chief additions which it makes to human

nature are Nuns, Nurses, Posing, Fencers, and Exotic.

§

This is humanity, as the movies have subdivided it for their own convenience, and the more one contemplates the economy of these lists, the more reason there seems for believing that it is the direct simplicity of the movies that lies close to the heart of their success. In the movies there is no tortuous psychological complication of character, no baffling mixture of evil and beneficence. Get the characters right the first time they appear, and the rest is a, b, c.

Dress-Young falls in love with Juvenile to the dismay of Heavy, who treacherously betrays heroine and her father, Character-Elderly, while Beard furnishes comedy for light relief, the Indians attack, and a rescue is effected by Cowboys and Make-ups. Put this not very complex dénouement of character into the frame of a Western story, spend several hundred thousand dollars on costumes, cavalry, pistols, tomahawks, tepees, and blank cartridges, handle large crowds with ability and intelligence, tie the story with appropriate titles to an episode of American history, grace it with some beautiful views of mountain range and valley, and you have "The Covered Wagon."

Exotic (blonde) is married to a duke, Heavy, whom she does not love and from whose embraces she is rescued on her wedding night by Juvenile, with the assistance of Latins, Longhaireds, Shorts and Toothless, cast as pirates, to be held captive till she reciprocates his love. Put this story into a background of dancing girls, treasure chests, poisoned wine, fond farewells, bare legs, toasts to the king, and self-sacrifice that doesn't hurt anybody in the long run, and you have "A Night of Love."

Nowhere else in the whole field of art is the dramatis personæ so instantaneously fraught with meaning as in the moving pictures. Nowhere else do characters step so promptly from the cast and announce themselves as old familiar friends. There is the ne'er-do-well son, a victim of overkindness on his parents' part, who goes to the war and proves himself the bravest soldier in the regiment. There is the father who has drunk himself into disgrace, been ostracized by his family, and dies without disclosing his identity to his daughter when, years afterward, as a brakeman, he saves her life on a railway track. There is the false friend who insinuates himself goodhumouredly into the confidence of the man with the pretty wife, but whose cheating at cards is sufficient clue to the audience of the tragedy

ahead. All these people, and countless more, are known by the cut of their clothes and the look in their eye when they face the camera. The first smile at the heroine is enough to mark a man as "good" or "bad."

In fact, some of the more experienced students of the movies can tell all this even before the picture starts, simply by looking at the names listed in the cast. For there is permanence as well as simplification about character in the movies. Once a sweet young thing always a sweet young thing. Once a villain always a villain, unless the change is announced with trumpets. Once a comedian always a comedian, and do not be deceived if no pies are thrown for the first few hundred feet of film. Once a cowboy always a cowboy, and always, if possible, astride the same bay horse.

For even the horses in this world of moving picture art have acquired the status of old friends. And it is not strange that there are more people who know Tom Mix rides "Tony" than know who is President of Harvard.

§

What the movies have done has been to create character-types as easily recognized and as dependable as Harlequin and his merry friends in

the old commedia dell'arte. As a nation, that is the way we like our character; a man is one thing or another, and never something in between.

If a man is a Republican let him be a Republican. But do not let him expect to be considered a Republican if he deserts his party on occasions simply because he happens to believe that his party is doing the wrong thing. The way to be a Republican is to stay one.

If a man is a poet, let him be a poet. But do not let him expect to be a business man. Do not let him expect to know whether he has ever overdrawn his bank account, or how much money he ought to pay for a lawn-mower, or whether General Motors is a good investment. For he is a poet, not a business man, and any knowledge on such points as these flies straight in the face of our ideas of what poets are and ought to be.

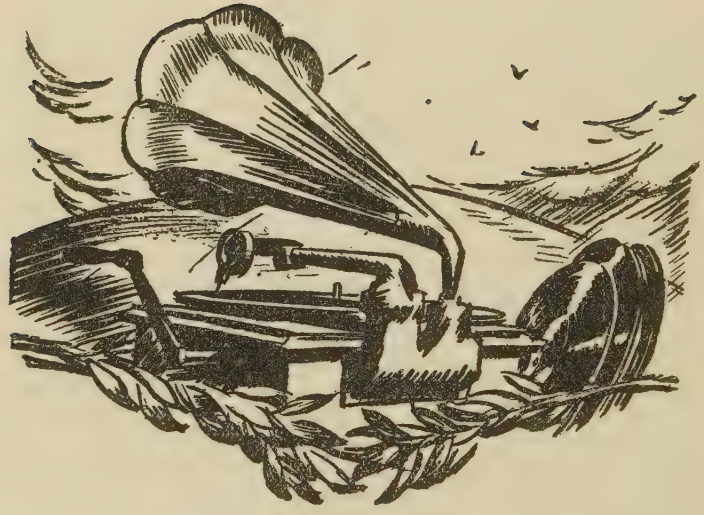
If a man is a prosperous and successful citizen let him be a prosperous and successful citizen. But do not let him expect to rate as such in his community if he chooses to live in an old ramshackle house just because he finds it charming, if he joins no clubs and owns no cars and prefers hiking trips to golf and hopes his town will never grow and makes no effort to weed the dandelions from his lawn. The way to be a prosperous and

successful citizen is to build a brand-new house with an oil furnace and a roof of imitation thatch, keep abreast of the new cars, join three clubs, and whatever the population of his town join hands with everybody else to double it.

That is what prosperous and successful citizens do in the moving pictures. For the moving pictures never fail us. Their characters do what is expected of them, at the proper moment, in the proper way. Within two minutes of the time each person in the play has appeared upon the scene the average spectator can tell who is going to be the hero, who is going to be the villain, who is going to be the goat, who is going to start wrong and come out right, who is going to start right and come out wrong, who is going to sacrifice her virtue for the sake of her old father and who is going to sit down on the fly-paper and make everybody laugh.

Life on the silver screen has no anomalies. What the movies have done has been to make an art of our regularity, and it is one reason why we like them.

VOX POPULI



CHAPTER XIII

VOX POPULI

CERTAINLY the calendar has lost the drab and uneventful look it had when only Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas stood out in red to brighten it. The calendar has picked up Weeks. When Go to Church Week ends, Apple Week begins. When Apple Week is over, Safety Week begins. The conscientious citizen has his hands full. Beethoven Week follows on the heels of Brush Your Teeth Week, and when everybody's books are balanced at the end of Thrift Week it is time to Plant a Tree. Smile Week, Clean-up-the-Yard Week, Get-out-the-Vote Week, Book Week, Father and Son Week, and Pay Your Bills Week come in a rush together, with Courtesy Week, Learn-to-Swim Week, Education Week, Brake Test Week, Fire Prevention Week, Constitution Week, Boost Your Own Town Week, Better Hearing Week, and Better Homes Week right behind them. Take-a-Bath Week has recently

been added at the suggestion of the Cleanliness League of North America.

The organization of American life into sudden spurts of seven days has made great headway in the last few years, and perhaps the explanation is not hard to find. We live in an age of great activity. The speed of a nation paced by rapid transit, quick-lunch restaurants, and air mail is distracting, and it can no longer be taken for granted that we will think of humdrum things that are necessary to our health and comfort: such as crossing railway tracks with caution, seeing that our brakes are tight, going to the polls to vote, learning to swim, paying our bills, cleaning our yards, and throwing our matches where they won't start fires.

It is not good for us to overlook such things, but we are busy, and the task of calling our attention to them taxes the ingenuity of those who have our happiness at heart. The practice of instituting special cycles to remind us that it is wise to save our money, cut our grass, look out for trains, and brush our teeth is one way of ringing a bell and announcing an idea.

§

It is the hope of persuading the busiest of all nations to stop long enough to catch its breath

that has given us new Weeks, and it is the same hope that has given us new Prizes. For the Prize, like the Week, is a bell-ringer and an attention-caller; and the practice of offering a cash award in the hope that the American people can be startled into doing things which they might do naturally and normally if they stopped to think, is now one of the characteristic methods of the nation.

Twenty thousand people are killed in motor accidents each year. This is a useless waste of life. The National Automobile Chamber of Commerce offers a prize of $6,500 for the best study on How to Promote Safety on the Highways.

Three thousand homicides occur each year in the cities of the country. This is an alarming figure. The Society for the Prevention of Crime offers a prize of $2,500 for the best program of reducing murders.

Too little is understood of the processes by which the nation gets itself involved in wars and treaties. The American Philosophical Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge offers a prize of $2,000 for the best essay on how to make friends and control the Senate.

Too many people still talk war and cherish animosity toward other nations. The National League of Women Voters offers a prize of $3,500 for the best twenty-by-thirty Christmas card ex-

pressing the thought of Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men.

The amount of faith which is put in prizes and the number of prizes which are dangled annually before a bustling and distracted nation are characteristic of the modern scene. This is a day of problems almost everywhere, and accordingly of prizes for almost everything. The New York Foundation offers a prize of $6,000 for the best plan of getting rid of slums. The National Electric Light Association offers a prize of $15,000 for the best plan of lighting antiquated homes. The Republican National Committee offers a prize of $10,000 for the best ideas for a party platform.

Other prizes thought up by more people anxious to make other people think are offered for the best plan of effecting the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations, the best plan of obtaining Christian coöperation among Christians, the best plan of opening radio communication with the planet Mars and "the most beautiful act performed within twelve months inside the city limits of Chicago."

§

Competition is keen. Every organization which offers a Prize or creates a Week has faith in the importance of its own perspective; and since the

public which has been invited to observe Apple Week is the same public which has been invited to submit prize essays on the excellence of prunes, and the public which is invited to express the thought of Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men is the same public which has been invited to petition Congress in behalf of Bigger Navy Week, it is plain that we are sometimes working at cross-purposes. The business of ringing a bell and calling the public's attention to any given set of facts is difficult enough at best; but when several thousand organizations convinced of the importance of their own programs all begin ringing bells at once, the effect is like the noon hour in a factory which makes clocks.

It is plain that what the situation needs at this point is an expert at ringing bells—nor is this expert lacking. The times have produced him as inevitably as they have produced Prizes for being thoughtful and Weeks for being prompt. He is called a Public Relations Counsel and he is precisely that entrepreneur between each new idea and a badly hustled public which the times demand. He has made a study of opinion. He knows what type of news the public likes to read. He knows what type of news the editors will print. Because it is his business to make news and see that it is published, he is sometimes called the

modern version of the old-fashioned press agent; but he is as far in advance of the old-fashioned press-agent as the modern Plant a Tree Week is in advance of an old-fashioned Arbor Day. For he has made a science of what was only a ballyhoo, and he is so well versed in the mechanics of mass emotion that he can give heart appeal and human interest to data on street railway earnings.

Such a man is too useful not to have his services appreciated, and in the rush to call the public's attention to thousands of ideas the public relations counsel is constantly becoming a more and more important member of society. Public utility companies employ him to explain the folly of too much regulation. Colleges employ him to encourage education. Banks employ him to encourage thrift. Low-tariff associations pay him to work up figures on the dangers of high tariffs. High-tariff associations use his data to denounce free trade. States which are rich in lakes and mountains, like Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, have fallen into line and employ public relations counsels paid from public taxes to point out their merits as a place for summer travel.

The public is large. To capture its undivided attention for even as much as five minutes is a priceless advantage for anyone with a new idea,

a new challenge, or a new bar of soap; and when thousands of organizations are competing for the public's attention simultaneously, it is inevitable that the modern public relations expert should find his way to the payroll of everything from governments themselves to the baking trust, the farm bloc, and the Standard Oil. Even the church has gone in professionally for public relations, and a plan of "selling" a good old-fashioned religion to a million indifferent Christians is now in progress under the direction of two hundred and fifty advertising clubs. When the church roof leaks or the walls need painting or the choir-room ought to have a carpet, it is no longer the custom to pray to the Lord and pass the hat among the congregation. A public relations expert is brought in to size up the Situation, think up a Slogan, organize Teams, define a Goal, and start the congregation on a Drive.

So much is happening all at once in the modern scene that it is not safe to assume that a worthy cause or a good idea will make itself felt of its own momentum. It is impossible to put much trust in Thoreau's quaint notion that if a man living in the woods makes a good enough mouse-trap the whole world will beat a path to his door to buy it. Launch a new mouse-trap in 1928 and the effort is spectacular. Surveys are undertaken to

determine the presumptive sales-resistance of potential purchasers to mouse-traps of different sizes, shapes, and colours. A national advertising campaign is undertaken to instruct the country in the use of bait. Pictures of villages in flames call attention to the fact that more harm is done by mice each year than was done in Belgium by the German army. Prizes are offered for the best letter on Mice, the Mortal Foe of Men. Mice Clubs are organized in the public schools and October 6th to 12th is announced as National Anti-Mouse Week.

At the proper moment the Mouse-Trap Boys strike up at Station KDA, broadcasting ukelele programs.

§

Voluntary coöperation in the pursuit of an idea is one thing. But compulsory coöperation is even more effective. And in a day when legislatures have undertaken to make everything from mouse-traps to public morals a field for national legislation, a day when every Drive inevitably suggests the happy solution of having a new law written on the subject, it is not strange that the process of creating mass opinion through the medium of scientific plugging should have reached perfection at the seat of legislative power. For legislatures

act on what they take to be a consensus of opinion. And the same process which has set aside Weeks to focus opinion and offered Prizes to stimulate opinion, and created public relations experts to guide opinion has given us the modern lobby.

Time was when the idea of outside interference in the work of Congress was regarded as malicious meddling. Now it is more generally realized that unless somebody interferes in the work of Congress nothing much will happen. For Congress itself is beset by the same distractions that confuse a public which has no time to think and hundreds of things to do at once; and it is plain that unless organized pressure is applied in a sensitive spot, a Congress which is confronted every year with the alternatives of fourteen thousand bills will whittle away its time in indecision.

In these circumstances the lobby has become an important factor in the modern legislative system. It supplies the impetus for action. Lobbying has ceased to be a trade practised covertly and in the dark, and with its new importance acquired a certain dignity. The lobbyist himself is no longer a sly and oily gentleman with a furtive wink, a bank-roll, and a shady record. He is a straightforward, self-confident, and God-fearing citizen who is proud of his work, sure that he speaks for millions and certain that he has a mission.

So important has the new lobbyist become, and so rich are the opportunities for constructive work in Washington, that more than four hundred organizations now maintain active lobbies in the capital and spend an admitted minimum of ten million dollars annually for the mobilization of opinion. Bankers, bootleggers, churchmen, copper kings, osteopaths, engineers, editors, ship captains and school-teachers are all represented here. Every organization which exists for the creation of popular sentiment, from the Ku Klux Klan to the Methodist Board of Public Morals and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States to the Anti-Saloon League and the Lord's Day Alliance, has its field marshal in Washington, its headquarters staff, its shock troops of public relations counsels, and its battery of mimeograph machines.

A crisis arises. It is proposed to do something which disturbs the Klan, annoys the Anti-Saloon League, or breaks the heart of the Chamber of Commerce. Immediately the guns begin to fire. Pamphlets and circulars are printed by the ton. Bulletins are sent to the city papers. Boiler plate is rushed to the rural press. Chain letters begin to multiply geometrically across the country. Resolutions, identical in content, are moved in a thou-

sand forums. Telegrams following one of six or seven standard patterns begin to pour in on Congress from points as distant as Key West and Santa Fé. And a noise is produced which might easily be mistaken for the indignant protest of an aroused and angry nation.

It is this noise that passes bills. Congress is waiting for a mandate. The public itself is dim, measureless, and far away. Opinion which is never organized is never heard. And tirelessly, day in, day out, four hundred alert and well-financed lobbies representative of the strongest clerical, social, and industrial interests in the nation plug away at the task of creating a synthetic product called opinion.

§

Such is the process by which ideas plucked from thin air frequently become the expressed will of the nation. The question of Muscle Shoals comes up. Congress waits for the voice of the public. The public has so many other things than Muscle Shoals to think about that it goes to bed tired and talks in its sleep. The result is babble which no one can hope to understand. But three energetic organizations known as the Sell Muscle Shoals League, the Rent-Muscle Shoals League,

and the Hold Muscle Shoals Forever League, stump the country with three sets of contradictory appeals and Congress hears three distant echoes. The second seems slightly louder than the first and considerably louder than the third. All three echoes disappear in the eddies of other distant echoes aroused by other issues. And the country is considered to have spoken.

Certainly the process of creating what is called political opinion in this country requires an elaborate application of the principles of mass production. We know what we like about golf. Nobody has to tell us how to build our houses. We manage to keep abreast of all that is new in motors, murders, and six-tube receiving sets. But in matters pertaining to our civic obligations it is plain that we need special Weeks to call our attention to familiar facts and special Prizes to stir our interest into action. We need experts in the art of propaganda to jolly us into the belief that on questions which we have never heard discussed we have deep-set convictions. We are so busy with our offices and shops and sports that we permit a large part of our theoretical privilege of self-government to escape into the hands of lobbies whose only real authority comes from the fact that our quiescence gives them an opportunity to assert that they are acting in our inter-

est. And in the whole process most of our talking is done by a few professional advisers. The Vox Populi that is supposed to thunder decisions from the mountain-top is strangely silent.

Yet what ought we expect? The day is gone when most of our problems are local problems and when a Vox Populi can be expected to speak authoritatively because it knows what it ought to say. How can a mass mind be expected to run the gamut of the problems which are now brought to its attention? It is easy enough to have a definite and constructive opinion upon such questions as whether the local city government is rotten and whether a new bridge should be built across the river; but how is any man either to think very wisely or feel very deeply about the whole vast spread of public questions which now constitute his daily news and which take him into complex problems as remote from his own experience as if they belonged in the Balkans?

Inevitably, as the range of public questions widens and as people who are not titans are called upon to take a firm and intelligent attitude on more and more political questions which they do not understand and in which they lack the slightest interest, it becomes apparent that if there is to be an opinion it must be generated artificially. It is the first stages of this process of creating

something out of nothing that have given us the Week, the Prize, the expert doctor of opinion and the modern lobby.

We make a mistake when we look to the mountain-top for the Voice of the People. The Voice of the People does not come from a mountain-top. It comes from a wooden box with a revolving disc on top, a set of cogs inside, and a big tin horn stuck up behind. It is a good machine, but it needs winding.

RINGSIDE

CHAPTER XIV

RINGSIDE

WHEN the Cathedral of St. John the Divine is dedicated to the Lord there will be two stained glass boxers in the window of its Sports Bay. This is 1928. Boxing has come a long way since the old days when Corbett and Choynski had to slink off to a barge to hold their famous bout, and the purse for a moderately good battle of fifty rounds was too small to be worth putting into tax-exempt securities. Not only do we have champions, nowadays, who can quote Shelley verse and chapter: boxing has a new status as a modern industry, as well managed as a church wedding, as respectable as tennis, and as profitable as aluminum and oil.

Corbett fought Choynski on the deck of a grain boat anchored in San Francisco Bay on the fifth of June, 1889, and there was not one candidate for the Senate in the audience, not a single millionaire's special waiting on a siding, and not one tax-collector at the gate.

Tunney fought Dempsey in Chicago on the

twenty-second of September, 1927, and in the presence of a distinguished audience of statesmen, millionaires, and men of letters every record in the history of prize-fight purses fell.

Corbett fought Choynski in a battle as famous in the folk-lore of the West as the San Francisco fire and the exploits of the Vigilantes. Under a broiling noonday sun in the Straits of Carquinez, two of the hardest hitters of the prize-ring pounded each other for twenty-seven rounds. Choynski had tied a brick to his boxing gloves when they were brought to the barge and thrown them overboard. So Choynski fought with a pair of buckskin riding gloves with three sharp seams up the middle of the back, borrowed from a gentleman at the ringside. Corbett wore a pair of two-ounce gloves compared with which the modern gladiator's weapons look like feather pillows. Choynski broke two knuckles on Corbett's left hand by butting him with his forehead in the second round. Corbett broke Choynski's nose in the fifth round with a smashing right and closed both of his eyes in the eleventh. Choynski fought for eleven more rounds only half seeing Corbett, until his seconds threw up the sponge in the twenty-second. Then he fought for five more rounds till Corbett felled him. The attendance was two hundred and the purse $2,000.

Tunney boxed Dempsey for ten rounds in Chicago under the glare of arc-lights, and one hundred and forty thousand people paid to see the show. The gate amounted to $2,600,000. The winner's share was $990,000. The loser was paid $430,000. The Government received $500,000 in income-taxes as its share of the profits. And it took a staff of eight hundred ticket-takers, twenty-two hundred policemen, and twenty-six hundred ushers three hours to find seats for the largest crowd that ever gathered at a prize-fight.

Boxing has become a big business in these modern days of six-ounce gloves and mass production. "Big business? I'll say it's big business," remarks Mr. Tex Rickard in the New York *Times*, "and growing bigger all the time."

Twenty-four special trains rolled into Chicago over the Pennsylvania Railway for the Tunney-Dempsey fight. Twenty thousand motor cars drove in from out of town. The New York Central's Twentieth Century Limited arrived in seven sections with seventy-seven Pullman cars. Twelve hundred reporters sat at the ringside. Two hundred and forty-five thousand miles of leased wire carried ringside news to twenty-five hundred papers. Tunney was brought into Chicago in an armoured car. Governor Len Small of Illinois achieved the honour of being permitted to climb

through the ropes before the fight began but lost his introduction through an oversight. Two hundred millionaires sat in the first ten rows of the audience. And thirty-six hats, forty-nine pairs of binoculars, and two sets of false teeth were found by the cleaners on the morning after.

Meantime, for the benefit of those who could not get to Chicago and disagree as to what had happened in the seventh round, sixty-seven broadcasting stations were linked into another record-breaking hook-up. Forty million people are estimated by the managers of these stations to have heard the story of the fight. Prisoners in Sing Sing listened in by special permission of the Acting Warden. Five people dropped dead of heart failure at their radio sets during the seventh round, three more dropped dead while they were tuning in, one dropped dead in an argument after the bout was over, and another died of excitement half an hour later in his bed. In the words of the Associated Press, these are all official figures.

§

Certainly the modern championship prize-fight has aroused an interest and achieved a prestige which could not have been foreseen a generation back. It has taken its place, as news, with

the biggest events that a post-war world can offer. And for this fact we are usually given two ready explanations.

The moralists point out that man is a brute beneath the skin and likes the smell of rosin in the ring, the sight of blood, and the smack of hard-hit leather.

The sociologists point out that for weeks in advance of every championship fight a ballyhoo like nothing produced in Corbett's day is kept up tirelessly by a modern and resourceful press, and that during the last few days before the battle starts it is difficult to find anything in the newspapers receiving whole-hearted and enthusiastic emphasis except the size of the champion's neck and calf, the number of times the challenger has scarred his sparring partners, the probable odds, the size of the gate, the inside gossip of the training camps, the contradictory forecasts of the ex-champions, and the cordial insults traded by the managers and seconds.

Both of these theories are good theories, and no more may be needed to explain the prestige now enjoyed by the modern championship battle than to cite the effect of ballyhoo upon the fighting instinct. Yet it is difficult to believe that the whole story is told in such an explanation. For half of the seats are gone and the fight is on for

hotel accommodations, with or without bath, long before the ballyhoo begins. As for the thud of the glove and the smell of rosin and the red glare of blood: the modern championship battle is not made that way. Even in the thirty-fifth row of the theoretically ringside seats it is difficult to see blood and impossible to smell rosin; most of the cheering comes when somebody has swung wildly enough to be seen from afar and produced a resounding smack with the flat of his hand upon his opponent's elbow.

As for the crowd that sits behind the thirty-fifth row and constitutes nine-tenths of the audience, we have reliable testimony as to what the spectacle really means. For the newspapers and the press associations have adopted the practice of putting trained reporters in the hinterland of the five-dollar seats, and at Chicago this was the consensus of opinion:

Two-thirds of the spectators in the distant seats near the top of the amphitheatre did not know who won the fight when they left the grounds.

"This was due partly to their great distance from the white-lighted ring," says the Associated Press, "partly to the twisting thousands that screened their view, and partly to the confusion that seemed to exist in the ring itself."

From the side of the ring the bleachers looked

like hills on the horizon. From the hills, in turn, the ring itself "seemed a distant dot of light on which marionettes moved," an almost inexplicable gleam in the darkness where "two toy pugilists, one in white trunks, the other in red, knotted together in a corner until the legs of one of them seemed to melt, dropping a champion to the canvas floor."

Smoke from thousands of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and the flash-powders of the camera men produced a fog so thick that at times those in the higher seats had the sensation of looking down from a mountain-top through a cloud-rift to some remote activity in a valley.

The referee's count over Tunney in the seventh round seemed "unconscionably long" to those on the edge of the rim; but as one of the spectators in these far-away seats explained, "light travels at the rate of only 180,000 miles a second."

§

This is the championship fight as it is now staged in the modern scene, and it is plain that big business has robbed it of the old-time contact between the gladiator and his crowd.

Possibly the worst things said of us, as men turned beasts, are true. Possibly it is a fact that we like the thud of uppercuts, the sight of gore, and

the spectacle of men withering under a savage rain of blows. But when we can no longer spot the uppercuts or see the gore, when what we thought was withering turns out in the next day's news to have been the shrewdest bit of boxing of the entire evening, then it is clear that something more than blood lust is needed to explain the rush for tickets. For blood lust comes off a poor second in the modern ten-round championship; and the amount of savage satisfaction which the average spectator derives from a bird's-eye view of such an affair is poor return for the price of his ticket, the loss of his sleep, a diet of ice-water and ham sandwiches, two nights in a day-coach, a mile and a half on foot in a milling crowd from the place where the trolley stops, and an erroneous impression as to which fellow got the decision.

What we are witnessing is the passing of the championship fight as an intimate spectacle of brutality at which gentlemen in the last row of a small and compact audience could count the broken teeth and offer their own riding gloves as weapons. Yet despite this fact interest in championship fights does not fall off. Instead, it reaches a higher pitch of enthusiasm every year. And perhaps the explanation lies in the pace of the times and the characteristics of a changing scene.

We live in a day when one thing after another of

the sort that used to be a great occasion has lost its greatness through sheer force of circumstance. There was a day when the International Exposition, the hit of the season at the opera, the charity ball, the lecture tour by the distinguished British author, the round-trip excursion to Niagara Falls, the appearance of a famous actress at a local theatre, the county fair, the annual visit of the circus and the balloon ascension at the state capital all served to illuminate life for people of different castes and social classes with a series of great occasions.

That day is gone. We live in a changing America, and the very richness of the diversions offered us in celluloid dramas and after-office-hours golf, radio evenings and Sunday motor tours, lodge nights and national murder trials, has taken the edge from the old-fashioned "great occasion." Thirty million people now run up and down the countryside, seeing more sights in seven summer Sunday tours than they used to read about all winter in the chaste pages of the most romantic family magazines.

"Expositions" are out of date. So are county fairs. Famous actresses are all right, but it is a poor town that does not show a famous actress in a close-up seven nights a week. The charity ball has gone under in a world of hotel teas and

roadside inns. Airplanes have blanketed balloon ascensions, and in turn become so common that they carry crates of eggs and postal cards. The opera comes in over the radio. So does the roar of Niagara Falls. The circus has an overpowering rival in the movies. It is almost impossible to take a train anywhere without meeting a distinguished British author.

One after another the events which stood out as memorable occasions not so many years ago have lost their grandeur in a new perspective. A few still keep their prestige. The championship prize-fight is one of them. And it holds its own for the best of reasons: because it cannot be duplicated anywhere outside of one squared ring and because, within that ring, it is staged so seldom that at best it comes but once a year.

Here, in an age of plenty, is something really rare. Here, in an age of comfort, is something hard to see. And each year, as the task of getting there and getting in and seeing anything grows harder, the more people there are who wish to go. For there is satisfaction in going to something that is really rare. There is honour in being one of those who do not care about expense and trouble. There is rich reward in being known at home as a man who sat at one of the few events which still retain the glory of a great occasion, surrounded

for half a mile on every side by statesmen, stage stars, judges, steel kings, ladies of the chorus, members of the Four Hundred, presidents of banks, mothers and fathers of famous children in the movies, and owners of the tabloids—the flower of the nation.

§

High up in the steep, black bank of seats at the south end of the stadium sit two travellers who have come six hundred miles from the tip of northwestern Kansas for this night of pleasure. The light is bad. The smoke is thick. A haze lies over the yawning valley of gray felt hats and hunched-up shoulders. Seat No. 1 and Seat No. 2, Row A, Section 32, have fallen short of expectations. For it was not foreseen that Row A would begin only when the alphabet had been run through twice, from AA to ZZ and AAA to ZZZ, and the result is bitter disillusionment.

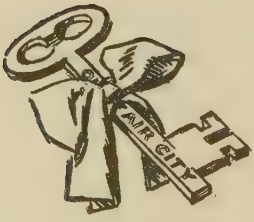
Never mind. There will be a tale to tell when this is over. For these two will be the only two from their own town, or a circuit of sixty miles around it, who have been at this scene in person. They will be the only two who have travelled miles and seen the show; and they will come back home and assure their friends that they sat in the best seats in the amphitheatre. They will be the

only two who have seen the ring and timed the count and watched with their own eyes the challenger's burst of fury in the seventh. They will be the very two who happened by great good luck on that day of days to meet the champion on his way to be measured and weighed-in, stood shoulder to shoulder with him for a minute in the crowd, took a good look at his condition, and decided then and there that he would win in the tenth by a decision.

It is a long road and a hard one that stretches out before the pilgrim to the championship fight. Prices are high, tickets are scarce, quarters are poor, and the whole trip means inconvenience and a disarrangement of each man's personal affairs. But not to go is to miss the joy of coming home again. Not to have seen this spectacle from however great a distance is to forego the pleasure of fighting the fight a second time for an audience of neighbours. Not to have had a share in this adventure is to renounce the right to tell the inside story—the solid satisfaction of being pointed out as one man among millions who was there.

Round Ten. The winner's hand is in the air. The pilgrimage is over.

HEADLINE HEROES


ZAMR CITY

CHAPTER XV

HEADLINE HEROES

CERTAINLY it is true, as Carlyle predicted it would be, eighty years ago, that we still worship heroes. "We all love great men; love, venerate, and bow down submissive before great men. . . . No nobler or more blessed feeling dwells within man's heart." But man's heart has had to grow to make room for heroes in an abundance of which Carlyle did not dream and the pace set for his loyalty is startling. This is the day of the non-stop flight, the million-dollar gate, the moving picture queen, the new Ford, the White House Spokesman, and the English Channel.

We turn casually to the day's news at breakfast with no thought of acquiring a new hero on this particular morning, and in bold type spread the full width of a front page find that a new hero has sprung full-panoplied from the news like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Some bold deed performed lone-handed, some spectacular and unexampled feat, some service to a cause worth

while but hitherto quiescent, leaps out at us in giant headlines.

The whole nation reads this news. The whole nation rings with it. For three days, a week, two weeks, a month—depending on the inherent interest of the story—this news is the talk of the land and every American has his own definite opinion of its importance to the future of humanity. We live for this period in an exciting world of fireworks, reviewing stands, congratulatory telegrams, exclusive pictures, paper bunting, life stories, official interviews, brass bands, and speakers of the evening. And then one day the air is quiet and the streets are swept. The newspapers suddenly look themselves again. The show is over. And the canonization of a new national hero stands as an accomplished fact.

For the experienced observer this is definite warning that the arrival of some new national hero may be expected almost any minute.

§

Not all our heroes are made in a day and crowned with laurels overnight. There are a few fixed stars in the constellations of our heavens. These are the heroes who win their way to glory over a span of years, come gradually to be recog-

nized as fixtures in our busy world, and continue to command our respect and admiration as long as they perform the deeds which we have set as their appointed tasks.

It is the appointed task of Babe Ruth to continue to threaten his own record of home runs year after year, with a bad year now and then forgiven, but with the possibility of a new record always in the offing.

It is the appointed task of Bobby Jones to win either the American Open or the British Open every year (preferably both) and to continue to hole putts at crucial moments from a distance of eighty feet while an excited gallery confidently expects the achievement of the impossible.

It is the appointed task of Douglas Fairbanks to lift the lady in his arms, bound elastically over walls that grow higher with each picture, and regardless of years to embody the spirit of untired youth, impudent skill, and remorseless vigour.

It is the appointed task of Mary Pickford to remain perennially young, ingenuously sweet, and even in an age of bobbed hair wear her curls in the same fashion.

It is the appointed task of Mr. Coolidge never to forget the spare New England hills, never to lose himself in a sudden avalanche of heartfelt

words, never to speak first and think afterwards, always to think first, choose his words, and remain an enigma to the politicians.

It is the appointed task of Mr. Ford to ignore the orthodoxies of finance, to defy the laws of gravity, to stand on his head, to see right side up, to scorn the advice of Wall Street, to do precisely what the bankers have told him is impractical, impossible, and suicidal, and to come off richer and more miraculous than ever.

Provided these tasks are accomplished in a manner measuring up to expectations, provided there is no reversal of form and no sudden stepping out of character, no man who has once achieved the status of a national hero and whose mission in life keeps him in the public's eye need fear a loss in prestige. He will acquire new prestige merely from the act of repetition, as the successful routine of his appointed task makes him a more and more familiar figure. The case of Mr. Ford is proof that as time passes even the faults of his youth will be forgotten and forgiven.

Mr. Ford, whose appointed task it is to grow richer every year, was only one of our millionaires ten years ago. He had not yet become the world's richest man. There were flaws in his armour then. Mr. Ford was not quite perfect. He was respected as a mechanic and a financier,

but smiled at as a faddist. It was admitted that he knew something about motor cars. But whenever he dared to pick up any new enthusiasm outside of his own shop a large part of the country was amused.

This was ten years ago. Of late Mr. Ford has acquired still another of his frequent hobbies. This time it is the collecting of antiques. In his travels around the country Mr. Ford picks up grandfathers' clocks, old hansom cabs, and bucket-engines that have lost their wheels. Yet nobody laughs at this. Nobody laughs, even though this new enthusiasm, antique-hunting, is the one enthusiasm above all others which has always been considered slightly comic by a forward-looking people.

Nobody smiles when it is announced that Mr. Ford has paid $150 for a slat-back rocker with the rockers gone. That is now assumed to be Mr. Ford's own business. Nobody laughs when Mr. Ford drops off the train in Georgia to buy an 1850 boiler, or drops off the train in Pennsylvania to buy an 1850 pair of pantalettes.

If Mr. Ford had done either of these things ten years ago the country would have roared with laughter. To-day Mr. Ford can do what he likes. His audience watches him with respect and friendly interest. For something has happened in

the last ten years. Mr. Ford has made a billion dollars and become a great tradition.

§

What is true of Mr. Ford is true of all our seasoned heroes. Their eminence, once achieved, atones for any minor blunders. They are titans now, and we think of them as titans. Mr. Ford can take a railway that has never earned a dollar and make it a sound investment by shaking up the office force and giving it a new set of charts. Mr. Ford is a wizard. He can take a coal company that could not pay its bills in April of one year and have it owing the Government an excess-profits tax in April of the next. Mr. Ford is a giant. He can do all sorts of things that nobody has ever done before, and not half try, at that.

Ability to work wonders and kinship with the real immortals, these are characteristics of our great men, and they are as typical of the home-run kings and the golf champions as they are of the production experts and the financiers. It is impossible to lead the league in home runs without being something of a Colossus or a Hercules. It is impossible to be a golf champion without being something of a Napoleon or a Michael Angelo. And if this sounds like overstatement, consider the last championship:

"Once or twice within the course of a century," wrote that well-qualified expert, Grantland Rice, reporting the event from Minikahda, "a prodigy comes along to ride the crest of the world. He may be a Rembrandt or a Galileo or a Shakespeare. He may be a da Vinci or a Milton. But there is about him an indefinable touch of mastery that lifts him far above the puny achievements of even the near great. Golf has contributed its addition to this galaxy of masters in the person of Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., who to-day won his third amateur championship by beating Chick Evans, of Chicago, 8 up and 7 to play."

This is accurate reporting. For certainly, in the light of hero-worship as it is now practised in the United States, it would be impossible to have a golf champion who was not a Rembrandt or at the very least a Milton. It would be impossible to have a football champion who was not a Galloping Ghost or a Red Rover. It would be impossible to have a popular heavyweight champion who was not a Man Mountain or a Manassa Mauler.

Day after day, thousands of columns of reporting fill the papers of a broad nation with the achievements of its heroes. And in sagas as dramatic as those of Carlyle's Norse god, Odin, we read of mighty men performing mighty deeds. So legendary have these men become that they

have lost their own identity in the greatness of their fame. It is the Flying Finn, the Fordham Flash, the Georgia Peach, the Terrible Turk, the Iron Men, and the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame who smash world's records.

§

There is an epic quality about our heroes that gives them stature. There is a flair about their way of doing things that gives them headlines. Yet they are plain men, notwithstanding this, and there is nothing unorthodox about them. They use plain words and like plain things and lead plain lives. If they were men of another sort they might not be our heroes. It is the misfortune of the present heavyweight champion of the world, and one factor which marks him down among the merely great and not among the very great, that he differs from his species. He likes books, or pretends to like books, or remains silent in the face of the accusation that he actually does like books—any one of these three counts being sufficient to disqualify him as a national hero. Our real heroes have no tastes which to the public mind are not appropriate to their appointed sphere of action, no dissatisfaction with the rôles they play, no illusions of grandeur and no pomp.

Henry Ford is so rich that he could buy a Balkan nation, but he likes puttering around in his garden and spends part of his time hanging bird-boxes from his porch on old bits of wire spring.

Bobby Jones is the Galileo of the golf links, but he has no swank and has been known to joke even when his approach shot overran the green.

Mr. Coolidge swept this country in one of the greatest landslides in its history, but he is a plain man of the people, has no airs, and has been known to go through a second summer with the same straw hat.

The Sultan of Swat is the holy terror of every pitcher in the league, but he is not too great to stop pounding the pitchers now and then, to play sand-lot baseball with the kids.

Douglas Fairbanks is a hero among heroes in an unheroic world, but he is unassuming, easily approached, does his best tricks for his friends, likes the things that average, ordinary mortals like, and even in the smallest and least important details of his life is so perfect a model of democracy, says the *Motion Picture Magazine*, "that instead of an elaborate, gold, diamond-studded scarf-pin such as most men of wealth wear, he uses a common, ordinary pin."

Mary Pickford's name is known to more people in more corners of the world than the name of any

other woman now alive, but she has not let fame distract her from the simple faiths to which she trusted when the feature film was a one-reeler. "Not once has Mary Pickford taken from her finger the little platinum band placed there by Douglas Fairbanks when they were married," one reads in *Picture Play*. "Wearing it, too, has sometimes presented difficulties. For instance, when Mary plays a little-girl rôle it has to be concealed. So Miss Pickford gets herself a slightly larger ring which fits securely over the other and looks like a little girl's trinket. When no second ring suitable for the purpose is available, Miss Pickford covers her wedding ring with tape and grease paint."

Through the whole mythology of our hero-worship runs this note of emphasis on the humanity of our heroes. They are great people. They perform great deeds. But like ourselves they are flesh and blood.

§

One reason why we are able to differentiate so clearly between the great and the very great—as well as one reason why our own age so far excels Carlyle's in the abundance of its heroes—is the fact that this is a new world and hero-making has become an enterprising industry. The great

man in Carlyle's day had little assistance in the matter of becoming famous. He could not expect a leisurely and unimportant press to help him much. He could not expect his every word to be broadcast to a vast audience by telegraph and wireless. He could not talk to a radio family of millions. He could not have his picture sent across ten states by telephoto process. He could not be interviewed by the human-interest writers of the ever-hungry syndicates. Fame came to him late and grudgingly, by processes infinitely slow and tedious.

It is vastly different now. Two cents in the slot of the modern publicity machine brings us intimate details of our heroes' lives, brought up to date for each edition. All of us know what Bobby Jones ate for breakfast on the morning he played Evans, what he wore when he went to the tee and how he liked the weather. All of us know what Mr. Coolidge thinks of his pet raccoon, Rebecca, what Babe Ruth says when he strikes out in the World's Series with a man on third, and what Mary Pickford thinks of girls in business and the year's best-seller. All of us know Mr. Ford's opinions on foreign loans and modern marriage, the business outlook in the Orient, and the essential qualities of a good tune. For Mr. Ford cannot stop on the road to buy an antique or change a

tire without being asked for his views on the question of the hour. And if Mr. Ford, being asked what he thinks of contract bridge, the Karolyi case, or the modernization of the Bible, replies that he doesn't think much of it, the result is dinner-table news that evening in every important paper in the country.

It is a highly efficient machine that keeps tab for us on our celebrities. It not only keeps us informed of minute details in the careers of heroes with an established reputation: this is the machine that makes new heroes overnight. This is the machine that suddenly plucks celebrities from the day's routine when we least expect it. This is the machine that fills our streets with reviewing stands and our plazas with brass bands. Throwing its bright white glare upon some unknown who has performed a deed of valour, it brings us a hero crowned with light.

Somebody swims the Channel, saves a ship at sea, or spans the ocean in a non-stop flight. The news rings out. For a moment the attention of the entire nation is focused with startling vividness by the press, the movies, and the radio upon a single news event, and in a country which is naturally fraught with enthusiasm the result is overwhelming. Ask any of our heroes. The reception given one of the most famous of them

all when he returned from Paris—Colonel Lindbergh—is still fresh in the memory of his country; but as evidence that almost anything can happen when the cheering starts, consider the high spots of that first hectic week.

Before he had been ashore six days Colonel Lindbergh was the recipient of the longest and most imposing speech delivered by the President of the United States since his annual address to Congress, fifteen medals had been awarded him, the Freethinkers' Society of New York had protested against the benedictions at his welcome, and he had been given what the Hotel Commodore described as "the largest dinner ever tendered to an individual in modern history." Statistics for this dinner showed that it required thirty-six thousand cups and plates, twelve thousand pieces of cake, three hundred pounds of butter, and three hundred gallons of green turtle soup, to say nothing of two thousand heads of lettuce.

Meantime, in these same six days, a song written by George M. Cohan entitled "When Lindy Comes Home" had been sung by the People's Chorus of New York, a tower thirteen hundred and twenty feet high had been proposed in Lindbergh's honour in Chicago, a baby elk in the Brooklyn Zoo had been named "Lindy Lou," eleven laundries had sought to incorporate at

Albany under the firm name "Lindy," the Western Union Telegraph Company had solicited thousands of telegrams of congratulation—"Twenty sample Welcomes. Check the one you want to send and write your name"—a new dance, the "Lindbergh Hop," had been invented in Los Angeles, a gentleman named C. Goldsmith had broken into print by urging that in behalf of cleanliness for growing boys bath-tubs be called "The Spirit of St. Louis," the Shriners had invited Lindbergh to fly over their convention at Atlantic City, the New York *Times* had published an editorial on his hair, the Pennsylvania Railroad had named a Pullman car for him, the International Brotherhood of Magicians had made him an honorary member, and in the annual terrapin derby at Ponca City, Oklahoma, seven entries had been christened "We."

§

Certainly a new explosive force has come to live with us. Hero-worship in our modern world is so widely shared and so instantaneously communicated to so many people at so nearly the same moment, with such spectacular results, that we have plainly acquired something at whose ultimate potentialities we can only guess. It may be that we shall curb our enthusiasm when the

next hero comes along. It may be that we shall tell ourselves that this is a time for poise, not tumult, an occasion for well-planned praise, not chaos, that it befits our dignity as a thoughtful people to take this new adventure calmly and think it out, and not, like the cow in Mother Goose, jump over the crescent moon. But it is much more likely that we won't.

For there is joy in the coming of a hero. There is a fine thrill in a new champion suddenly revealed. There is solid satisfaction in standing beside him when the drums roll and the cameras click, lining the streets to bid him welcome, packing the banquet-halls to hear him praised, basking in the aura of his sudden fame, breaking the humdrum routine of an ordered living with a gala day, enjoying for a moment the thrill of self-identification with this fleeting bit of glory.

"Society is founded upon hero-worship," Carlyle wrote, eighty years ago.

How else would the spotlight ever find us?

Banners flying in the breeze. Sidewalks crowded to the curb. Tension in the air. Balloons. Soiled tradesmen hawking souvenirs. Earth new-turned. Young Spring, once more. Strike up the band! . . . Another hero.

THE ATTACK ON NEW YORK

CHAPTER XVI

THE ATTACK ON NEW YORK

AMID generous applause one of the religious weeklies remarked recently that Manhattan is an alien island off the eastern coast of the United States, rolling in wealth, bursting with pride, and scorning the Ten Commandments.

The remark is typical of much current comment. In many sections of the West and South the thought prevails that New York is overdoing it. New York is too big. New York is too rich. New York is too smug. New York is too wet. New York is too wild. New York is too flip. New York is too "European." New York is too proud of its sky-line.

Do not mistake this for mere envy. And do not believe that only on a few outlying frontiers is such a point of view expressed. Criticism of New York is both widespread and eloquent. The Iowa farmer rails at Wall Street. The Anti-Saloon League talks of treason. The Wheat Belt, annoyed by too many Eastern triumphs, eggs the Pirates on to lick the Giants. The West Coast charges

New York with trying to throttle Western trade. The Portland Chamber of Commerce accuses New York of attempting to block the development of every port except its own. A clergyman in Maryland sees Babylon outdistanced. The Pullman cars and the night-boats are full of tired visitors discussing New York and thanking God they do not live there. The morals of Broadway and the ethics of Wall Street are under weekly fire in a hundred pulpits. A feeling prevails not only that New York has embraced ideas alien to the spirit of the fathers, but that New York is attempting to ram its theories down the national throat. "The West wants to know," says the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals, "if New York is a menace."

Echo, for the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals, answers yes. "New York," thinks the Board, "is in danger of losing the proud affection which Westerners and Southerners have held for it these many years." The idea is gaining ground that New York is "a foreign city, run by foreigners for foreigners and according to foreign ideas." In New York the theatres are "specializing in profanity, blasphemy, and nakedness." In New York the publishers are manufacturing "literary garbage" in the name of art. In New York the wits have discovered that it

is easy to be humorous by classifying Westerners as "hicks" and Southerners as "yokels." In New York things go from bad to worse, and "the great mass of un-Americans" has found itself, at last, in a majority.

It would not greatly disturb the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals, one suspects, if in return for a few hundred millions in gold francs New York were traded to the French Republic. Not all critics are so ardent. But in the farmer's resentment against Wall Street, the West's anxiety for Prohibition, a sharp disagreement over morals, and the suspicion that New York is both needlessly self-satisfied and increasingly contemptuous of what is not its own, there is material which worries more than one observer.

Debating the merits of New York ranks with golf and the radio and the rest of our new enthusiasms as a subject of unflagging interest in the modern scene.

§

The most fundamental charge being brought by its critics against New York is the charge that here is an "alien" city, literally un-American and anti-American in its make-up. For this charge does not concern itself with any of the details of

New York's alleged hypocrisy, conceit, bare legs, hip-pocket flasks, and Continental morals; it offers, instead, an hypothesis which would explain all of New York on the single central theory that the city has gone foreign. This is the conclusion at which the Methodist Board of Public Morals reluctantly arrives. It is a theory which has been argued not only by the clergy but the layman.

New York, it is pointed out, is the only metropolis in the world, and perhaps the only metropolis in history, more than three-fourths of whose population is alien to that of the nation upon which it lives. How many old-fashioned Americans are there in New York? Foreign stock, it is said, furnishes 76.4 per cent. of the city's population. To this add the Negroes. "At the end of the computation," one American historian suggests, "one is justified in doubting whether as much as 10 per cent. of New York's population is American in the sense of possessing, in the form of a heritage, old American ideals, prejudices, and characteristics." The country feels that its metropolis "lacks American ideals as an inheritance from white American ancestry." It is this suspicion which is "at the heart of the present American feeling about New York."

There is more than a little evidence that this is true. But true or not, it is worth noting that in

no such feeling can be found the original causes of the country's quarrel with New York. For it would be difficult to prove that it is really the alien population of the city which actively and aggressively annoys the West.

What is the alien population of New York? A vast multitude of hard-working, voiceless, poverty-pinched men and women who sew caps, deliver ice, stitch pants, sometimes vote Socialist, more often vote Tammany, peddle groceries, and live in tenements. There are perhaps ten thousand New Yorkers of foreign birth or foreign extraction whose business it is to deliver milk. It would take a great stretch of imagination to believe that it is their erotic foreign theories of art which are undermining the American theatre. Nobody consults their theories of art. Their theatre is Coney Island.

There are, again, perhaps thirty thousand "foreigners" in New York who make their living sewing buttons. Their lives, like countless other foreign lives in the metropolis, are first of all a grim race to meet rent, union dues, and doctors' bills. The only way in which any one of these people could conceivably appear on the first pages of the newspapers—thereby to annoy Americans of native white ancestry in Detroit, Denver, or Savannah—would be by inheriting an

unexpected title from an uncle in Albania or by falling forty stories in an elevator shaft.

The fact is that New York's alien population is really hidden away from the rest of the country so completely that if it were not for the census figures and the ruminations of New York's interpreters the rest of the country would scarcely know that it existed. It is not the tenement-huddled alien population of New York which imports Benedictine, bullies Congress, dances all night at cabarets, forecloses the mortgages on Iowa farms, pays $20 for a brace of theatre tickets in the hope of being horrified, sneers at the rustic West, and regards itself with deep-seated and abiding satisfaction. It may well be that the known preponderance of an alien population in New York does colour the country's thoughts and helps inflame a dislike already in existence. But the actual positive irritants in this relationship of New York and its hinterland are not to be found in Little Italy or Chinatown. To be irritating it is necessary first to fill and hold the country's eye.

§

Three great arteries orient the New York which actually commands the headlines and gives its critics in the West and South something to fume about. These arteries are Wall Street, Broadway,

and Park Avenue. Wall Street has the international bankers. Broadway has the cabarets, the bootleggers, the racing touts, the wise-crackers, and the sex shows. Park Avenue has the dollar-royalty which prides itself upon possessing the last word in sophistication, elegance, and culture.

Much can be said of these three streets. Much has been said of them. Much is being said of them to-day with feeling. But one thing which it is difficult indeed to say of them is that they are not "American."

Granted that there are plenty of foreign names emblazoned on the doors of the Park Avenue apartments which look down on inner courts and Spanish patios: the fact remains that most of New York's successful immigrants come not from Poland and Ukrainia but from points west and south. For years, while the covered wagon has been headed west, individual aspirants for wealth and power have been forsaking it en route and coming east again. A great many of those Wall Street bankers whom the Iowa farmers now denounce as lacking an American point of view are simply ex-Iowans.

Both Wall Street and Park Avenue have drawn heavily upon the rest of the country for recruits. Even the stage, which such critics as the church-

men of the Methodist Board of Public Morals think has especially fallen under foreign domination—what with its attempts to outdo Paris in the matter of plain talk, bare bodies, and erotic love themes—still draws heavily upon the provinces for its producing personnel. Of the ten most active producers now operating in New York none are "aliens" and only one is a born New Yorker. The other nine hail from cities as American as Chicago, Providence, and Syracuse.

Nor is this all. Broadway, Wall Street, and Park Avenue not only have their quota of the native-born: they manage with amazing speed to assimilate their aliens.

Mr. Rosencrantz, born in Galicia but now living in New York, has made a fortune—let us say—by patenting an invention which cuts one-quarter of a cent per yard from the cost of weaving woollen cloth. Does Mr. Rosencrantz, having thus arrived at leisure and great wealth, seek to create for himself, as far as possible, his native background in Galicia? Does Mr. Rosencrantz search for a house with a Galician look about it, surround himself with old Galician friends and give Galician dinners? Mr. Rosencrantz does not. Mr. Rosencrantz buys the largest, most expensive, and most orthodox apartment obtainable on Park

Avenue, and applies simultaneously for membership in six golf clubs. Mr. Rosencrantz purchases a country place on the Long Island Riviera; and if he observes that there is anything about his house which distinguishes it from the next ten houses, north and south, he chops it off.

Faithfully, as each new iceless ice-box and each new noiseless motor takes its place upon the market, Mr. Rosencrantz buys it; his house is American from the imitation-English shingles on its roof to the brass pipes in its laundry. His Winslow Homer hangs in the right place above the mantelpiece; his specially built-in radio cost two thousand dollars; his daughters go to boarding-school; his wife moans if she is one new play or one new watering-place in France behind the ladies of her set. Religiously does Mr. Rosencrantz comply with the ritual of American living.

The man himself may be seen, sometimes, sitting at a window of the exclusive city club to which he has been admitted by special vote because he owns the land on which the building stands. There is a far-away look in his eye, but it betokens no memories of his fatherland. A chance item in the evening paper prompts it. Certain factory-hands in a Passaic mill have gone on strike. They are Galicians from his own Galicia.

And Mr. Rosencrantz, puffing a cigar and glancing at his watch to see if it is not time for someone to come and take him home, mutters:

"Damned foreigners. . . . Bolsheviki!"

§

Give the devil his due. It is only fair to Mr. Rosencrantz and his fellow apartment-owners in the Belvedere Arms—sixteen rooms, six baths, servants' wing and private garden on the roof—to recognize that the New York of Park Avenue has more in common with the rest of the United States than readily appears upon the surface of its busy life. Consider the bill of complaints.

The first of the specific accusations brought against New York, aside from the general charge that it is alien, concerns its insubordination in the matter of the Volstead Act.

New York is wet. That is an open secret. But no one would argue seriously that New York is the only large city in the United States in which Prohibition is unpopular. The opponents of the Volstead Act contend, in fact, that it is only one of a very large number of cities in which Prohibition is unpopular, and cite as proof the results of referenda held in these cities and the efforts of their local Congressman to modify the law. The friends of Prohibition challenge this. The law is

the law, they say; referenda are meaningless; and there is no accounting for the antics of a minority in Congress. But even the Anti-Saloon League will admit this much: that if New York is wet, so is Milwaukee. And if Milwaukee is wet, so, alas, are Chicago and St. Louis. And none of these cities is an alien island off the coast.

Moreover, no attempt to measure the wetness of New York can properly ignore the contribution of the city's guests. Of every seven corks which are still popped annually on Broadway, it has been estimated that three are drawn not by and for the native population of the city, but expressly for the entertainment of its visitors from out-of-town. This estimate is unreliable. To frequenters of night life in the Broadway cabarets it may seem, if anything, a little low. But low or high, it does suggest a fact with which eager critics do not always reckon. New York is not only a city but a national pastime.

What is Manhattan Island, within the individual experience of most Westerners and Southerners who come to visit it, if not a place in which to negotiate a certain business deal and then make merry drinking things, eating things, seeing things, dancing things, and buying things which are either unobtainable or disapproved of, in the Mississippi Valley?

This might be the diary of an average visit:

Mr. A., of Saginaw, Michigan, registers at the Hotel Belmore, with wife, business partner B., and Mrs. B. In a stay of four days the quartet manages to encompass two matinees, four evening shows (by deliberate choice, the four which they have heard are racy), six cabarets, and one duty-call on their Aunt Fanny. They depart, having happily missed Aunt Fanny, with a record of personal first-hand contacts established with one hotel clerk, two elevator-men, three bell-boys, two chambermaids, one barber, two hairdressers, six theatre-ticket agents, eleven doormen, four-teen waiters, thirty-six taxi-drivers, and one old friend from Ypsilanti. All of these people seem to be up at all hours of the night and to have nothing in particular to do except help somebody else get some place in a tremendous hurry. And from this fact Mr. and Mrs. A. and Mr. and Mrs. B. conclude, looking back on it from Saginaw, that New York is not only a place where everybody is perpetually in a rush, but a place which is wholly, utterly, and completely devoid of all the elements of home life.

§

This is a sound observation as far as it goes. But obviously it does not go far beyond the caba-

rets. Not all New Yorkers live in taxicabs. And behind the gay front of its night life Manhattan Isle has much to reassure its guests if they have time to browse.

What is it that distinguishes Park Avenue from an average street in an average town? A great deal of scenery, of course: brick fronts, roofs ten stories above the street, canopies running to the curb, a hundred theatres around the corner, opera at Thirty-ninth Street, contact with a lively modern world, doormen with little whistles. Certainly it is another scene; but it is not played with wholly different people. The New York of the three great avenues has its own individuality, but it preserves its points of contact with the continent behind it. For example:

It is said of this New York that it is a sophisticated place, whereas the small town (bless its heart) will bite on anything.—Query: Is there any city in America in which people fall over themselves more rapidly than people fall over themselves in New York to buy tickets for a charity bazaar, the purpose of which they do not know but attendance at which will permit them to gaze upon the Grand Duchess Feodorovna, third cousin to the late Czar of Russia? The small town, perhaps, will bite on anything. So will New York.

It is said of New York, again, that it has outgrown back-slapping and after-dinner oratory, whereas the small town dotes on bombast with its coffee and likes being brotherly in public.—Query: Is there any other city in America except New York where a conscientious Mayor is invited to address an average of four public banquets to the week, where it is thought inhospitable not to welcome visiting celebrities by making the same speech seven times, and where two solid columns of each morning's papers could be filled, and sometimes are, with lists of "those attending" civic dinners held the night before?

It is said of New York that it has poise and sophistication—whereas the small towns are forever rushing breathlessly from fad to fad. Here they are, now searching aimlessly for a successor to the Ask Me Another game that was the fad last year, whereas one year before that Michael Arlen was the rage, and one year before that, crossword puzzles, and one year before that, Mah Jongg. What logical line of intellectual or emotional development, it may be asked, can possibly exist between these four enthusiasms? And if it has taken the small towns four years to advance or decline from Mah Jongg to Ask Me Another via crossword puzzles and Michael Arlen, where will the small towns be four years from now, and

what in Heaven's name will they have covered in the meantime?

One man who could make a good prediction is Mr. Gerald Carter.

§

Mr. Carter is a broker, just an average New Yorker, a neighbour of Mr. Rosencrantz in Park Avenue, and at the moment when this inquiry is addressed to him he is sitting down to dinner. Mr. Carter, in fact, is sitting in a chair made by Duncan Phyfe. Mr. Carter does not like chairs by Duncan Phyfe. He cordially detests them. They make his back ache. But since the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened its new wing there has been a rush for early American furniture, and in the scuffle Mr. Carter lost an armchair.

He has acquired, on his right, a dinner-guest. He does not like his dinner-guest. The man is plainly crazy. But he is the latest poet, general, or something of the sort to arrive from Poland or some other place, and at the moment is regarded as a modest catch for any dinner. Mr. Carter will take him to-night to hear Paul Robeson sing Negro spirituals. Mr. Carter does not like Negro spirituals. He does not like singing. And if he had to hear something sung it certainly would not be Negro spirituals. But if Mr. Carter does not take

his guest to hear Paul Robeson sing to-night, Mrs. Carter, who also dislikes singing in general and Negro spirituals in particular, will not be taking advantage of the cultural opportunities of living in a large city.

There will be time, afterward, to drop in at the Palais d'Or. Mr. Carter does not like the Palais d'Or. He has never been inside of it, but he knows someone who has. Mr. Carter himself prefers the Terrace Garden. The tables are large and the head-waiter is a friend of his. But the Terrace Garden, it must be confessed, is old and out-of-date. It is almost three months old and almost two months out-of-date. The Palais d'Or is the latest thing in town. And Mr. Carter knows that if two weeks pass and he is still unable to agree with his friends that while the music is good the prices are outrageous, someone at the club will speak to him about it.

Of Mr. Carter's evening it remains to be said that upon his return home he will enjoy a cigarette in a library one of whose top shelves shelters six crossword puzzle books, five Ask Me Anothers, and two sets of Mah Jongg tiles. But Mr. Carter has forgotten the east wind and the white dragon and the three-toed sloth and the printer's measure and the Egyptian sun-god, and no longer remembers the answers to such questions as How did the

gypsy moth get to America? What is a caryatid? And why does a locomotive back up before starting? Small towns, perhaps, can remember that they were once amused by things like this, but not Park Avenue. For Park Avenue has too rich a past, in sudden fads, and too troublesome a future. Of all fad-ridden cities which toss restlessly on their pillows because they do not know what will be either fashionably proper or fashionably improper in the morning, New York is the most amazing.

Where will the small towns be, four years from now? A month or two behind New York, having tried, in getting there, one-eighteenth as many starts.

§

Lights flicker on Mannattan Bridge. The bright eyes of a Bronx local sparkle suddenly as it takes the curve at Fourteenth Street. A tug whistles to a ferryboat for right of way in the dark river below Vesey Street. Dusk falls, and two New Yorks go home to dinner.

There is one New York which will eat in the drab rooms of the great steel barracks which house drab people living humdrum lives. Somebody will complain that the cod is burned, and somebody else will complain, in Yiddish or Italian, that his eyes

ache from too much close work with the needle. The night will be hot and a child may fret. The room will smell because the sun has not looked into it since somebody built another barracks on the other side of the narrow alley. A fat woman with her elbows pillowed on the window-sill will watch a shrill crowd in the street below, and no one will suspect that the West worries because all the fine old things of the metropolis are now controlled by aliens. This is the foreign city.

A second New York will ride uptown in limousines, take the bus or come home on the 5:15: to dinners at which the respective merits of gooseneck putters, tinted stucco, Dempsey and Tunney, Chaplin and Lloyd, the widow's defense and the state's prosecution, six-tube sets and semi-balloons are still discussed by patriots, man to man, and in the spirit of the fathers.

This New York may ride a little faster but it rides in the same carryall, and Band Wagon is its name.

YOUNG AMERICA

CHAPTER XVII

YOUNG AMERICA

SKYSCRAPERS stand on the river's edge. The West is a settled land of farms. There are no woods left where the old trails ran, and the hills are spanned with iron tracks. Cranes that can lift whole cars of coal fill the hulks of giant barges. Electric hammers bark as they punch hot rivets into steel. Rotary presses built to print one hundred thousand papers an hour pant for something to scream about in the morning. Smoke shoots high from the stack of a locomotive as it climbs a grade with a load of freight-cars on its back: B. & M. 4244, with sheet iron from Pittsburgh for Dubuque. . . . C. & O. 47811, with grand pianos for Cheyenne. . . . Santa Fé 7065, bound west to the coast with a cargo of non-skid cords for San Diego, California.

Six-tube sets and tinted stucco . . . goose-neck putters and semi-balloons . . . patriots discussing Lloyd and Chaplin, Ruth and Gehrig, Jones and

Hagen, the widow's defense and the state's prosecution. . . .

This is a new America, and a different one.

§

John Smith stood on the steps of his farmhouse in the hills of Connecticut in 1791, and watched his son drive west into a wilderness called Ohio. Washington was President. The first Congress had met in New York two years before and passed a tariff bill. Shays' rebellion was a thing of the past, there would be no more trouble over law and order, and the new craze for adjustable horse-screens on the hearth was plainly something sure to last.

Hepplewhite mirrors were the rage; the old Constitution mirror with its gold eagles and its plaster garlands was going out of style. William Dunlap had just staged the first annual production of the Follies in New York; but a law against stage plays still stood on the statute books of Massachusetts and the Boston police had raided a performance of "The School for Scandal."

Shoe-strings had come into fashion for the first time one year before; the time-honoured buckle was going out of style. Everybody was talking of Lamplighter, the great mare that had won six races in a row. Everybody was talking

of the Hessian fly, which had spread from Long Island across New Jersey into Pennsylvania. Everybody was talking of Matthew Carey's magazine, and nobody was really in the swim who did not have a woven coverlet with a pattern of "Blazing Star" or "Sunrise on the Walls of Troy."

§

John Smith, 6th—in a new America—stood on the steps of his Spanish villa in 1924, and watched his son start north from Pasadena on a non-stop flight to San Francisco. Coolidge was President. Congress had met the year before and passed a tariff bill. The year 1924 is not so far away; but at the pace of our modern living, and in view of all that has happened since, it seems a little dim and rather hazy. Horse-screens, to be sure, had long since ceased to be in style. So had woven coverlets. Nobody talked of Daniel Shays or the Hessian fly. But the people of these somewhat distant days of 1924 did talk of things as remote from the modern world in which we live as the Bok peace prize and the Schoellkopf pearls, the little black bag and the "veiled threat" of a foreign Ambassador that had roused the Senate.

Twenty-two thousand plans had been submitted for the Bok prize. The Senate had promptly in-

stituted an investigation. The Prince of Wales was visiting on Long Island. Blue shirts were coming into style. Alabama cast twenty-four votes for Oscar W. Underwood. The Crime of the Century had been committed by two young men in the city of Chicago. A strange figure from the distant past named Firpo had been ushered into the White House with great pomp. Three naval fliers had completed their flight around the world; there was much talk of passenger planes for trans-oceanic navigation. The Florida boom was at its height. The President of the United States wore a smock instead of a pair of chaps on his vacation. And everybody was talking of King Tut-ankh-amen, reading stories of King Tut-ankh-amen in the magazines, seeing pictures of King Tut-ankh-amen in the rotogravure sections, reading bulletins of King Tut-ankh-amen in the five-star finals. Egyptian bracelets were the rage. Egyptian silhouettes were favoured in the styles. Egyptian dining rooms were being built in all the best hotels. Sixty-five colleges had introduced new courses in Egyptian history. Barnum & Bailey's circus had an Egyptian clown.

Words that come back to us now as strangely familiar and as having had some meaning of importance in these distant days are Epinard, the little green house in K Street, Cozy Dolan, the

Flying Cop, the hammer murderess, Edward B. McLean, Mobilization Day, the Millionaire Orphan, Mrs. Buzzi, pung and Magnus Johnson.

§

John Smith, 6th, left California four years later to visit his ancestral home in the low hills of New England. This was 1928. Coolidge was still President, but much had happened in the meantime.

Interest in plans for American participation in world peace, which had seemed real enough in 1924 to produce twenty-two thousand plans and a good deal of discussion, had disappeared by 1925. As a topic of public interest, American participation in world peace had been succeeded by the issue of man's descent from monkeys, a problem culminating in the Dayton trial. King Tutankh-amen was forgotten. The round-the-world fliers were home again, but there was no talk of spanning the Atlantic with air-lanes. This was the year of Gunnar Kasson's dash to Nome.

Another shift of interest followed shortly. For within twelve months of the time when the Dayton trial was at its height and the whole country was debating whether Daniel in the lion's den was intended to be taken literally, the Dayton trial, with all its lawyers, was a reminiscence. The proud record of 2,000,000 words of news telegraphed

from Dayton in the first six days of the Scopes trial went by the board with a new record of 2,700,000 words telegraphed from Somerville, N. J., in the week that Willie Stevens took the stand. For the Crime of the Century had occurred this time in circumstances so extraordinary that it focused everybody's interest on one spot and started the whole country debating Henry Stevens and the fish as eagerly as it had been debating Jonah and the whale.

This was 1926, two years before John Smith, 6th, came east to look for his ancestral home. Queen Marie had landed on these democratic shores. Unmarried women, married women, and married women with two children were being timed across the English Channel. It was a year of great discussion, and the moral and ethical values at stake in Earl Carroll's theatre party and the dissolution of the Food Trust were tied up intricately with the moral and ethical values at stake in General Smedley Butler's repudiation of his host and Princeton's break with Harvard.

Yet twelve months later, when another year had passed and John Smith, 6th, had packed his bag for the long trip east from California, the dissolution of the Food Trust had ceased to be a topic of discussion without any very clear recollection of what did happen finally and whether some-

body had dissolved it; the moral and ethical values at stake in General Smedley Butler's repudiation of his host and Earl Carroll's theatre party had been succeeded by the moral and ethical values at stake in Peaches Browning's counter-suit and Aimee McPherson's trip into the desert. Interest in trans-Atlantic flights had taken the place of Princeton's break with Harvard. And Queen Marie and the English Channel had been forgotten in a new world that had poison alcohol and Big Bill Thompson.

§

John Smith, 6th, came east in 1928, but he did not find his ancestral home when he searched for it one raw spring morning. He found the farm where the first John Smith had told his son that he would make a great mistake to turn his back on all that was safe and sane for the fresh-water lakes and the wilderness of Ohio. But the old Smith farm had stood too near a growing town. Times change too fast. And the farm was a farm no longer. One half of it was a golf course now with a par of 69, and Maplewood, a restricted suburb of Italian villas, claimed the other.

The road still crosses a brook when you leave the hill that used to be an orchard and is now a well-played mashie shot. But the white birch tree

that stood at the bridge has long since gone its way, together with the weather-beaten mill that was thought to be an eyesore even in the days when the first John Smith hitched his horses for a drive to town. There is a roadside inn on the site of the mill, and two iron struts now hold a metal sign aloft in the hollow where the white birch stood. D, dash, U, dash, C, dash, K, dash, dash, D, dash, I, dash, N, dash, N, dash, E, dash R, it winks with its bright electric eyes each evening after seven; then, in a sudden flood of light, Table d'Hôte—$1.

How much charm the road has lost in these new days there is no one now who can remember. Possibly it was never a road to boast about: just an ornery road that began at the village store and strolled off somewhere till it lost its way and stopped, climbing the hills in lazy loops and paying a call on things that caught its eye along the way and stopping to look twice when it passed anything at all remarkable and being silly enough to dodge old trees and gardens with a generous swoop, instead of hacking them down and running over them. It was a friendly road; and even the weeds were so little afraid of it that they came down to its edge and looked across; and sometimes, if the truth be known, strayed out into the middle lazily and settled down.

It is a new road now. That much is certain. It does not ramble now. The kinks have been taken out of it with a master hand; and hard, straight, white, and shiny it cuts its way across the hills. Only a gorge, a granite rock, or the face of a mountain throws it off its track. Only a man who cannot read need risk his life or lose his way. This is a straight road now. And over it runs a tireless stream of motors, covering endless miles by day and waking the dead with their shrill sirens in the night.

For this is no longer the road that went somewhere and stopped. This is the road that goes somewhere and never stops, the road of gas-tanks, pop-stands, hot dogs, and filling stations, that has become the pulsing artery of a nation.

§

John Smith drove over the road that was all curves and kinks in 1791, and did not dream of the America that was to arise around his farm. He did not dream of an America so vast that it would span the continent, so strong that its back seemed built of steel, so boisterous that it had made the whole world look its way, so young that it had just begun to write a history and so powerful that it would command the respect, the fear, and at least occasionally the affection of people

living overseas in distant lands. He did not dream of an America so tirelessly rebuilding all it had and all it owned that furnaces in the Allegheny hills would roar for more ore dug in Minnesota, bridges would be thrown across wide valleys, deserts would be piped with water, tunnels would be chiselled through a mountain side to save three-quarters of a mile, and cities would be torn down willingly to build new cities on their bones. He did not dream of an America so strange and so fantastic by comparison with any standards of his own that it would be filled with aldermen voting solemnly for Brush-Your-Teeth Weeks, colleges giving courses in the Care of Lawns, hosiery salesmen picking perfect ankles, lawyers practising hours with a brassie, newspapers printing thousands of columns of cross-examination of corset salesmen charged with murder, gentlemen with flowing plumes and swords and bucklers pretending they were coming to the rescue of beleaguered maids on lodge night, and seven million radios baying at the moon.

Nor did he dream, when the night wind whistled down upon a New England farmhouse that had not yet evolved into a Spanish hacienda, of an America so headlong that it would rush furiously from one enthusiasm, one worry, and one passion to another, never static, never still, never

content with marking time or staying put, hurrying, hurrying, hurrying, to new conquests and new follies, new triumphs and new thrills.

This is a new America. All that it is safe to say of it is this: it will be a still newer America tomorrow. For we are a restless people, with a great store of curiosity and an immense reserve of energy, a heritage of youth and a tremendous will to go somewhere.

Show us a new goal and we shall be off again, as we have been off before, on so many other bright, auspicious mornings.

THE END

DATE DUE
MAY 7 1940
OCT 8 - 1941
JAN 27
MAY 12 1998
AIR CITY
EXTRA
EXTRA

DOMINICAN COLLEGE LIBRARY
E169 .M54
Merz, Charle/The great American band wag
3 3645 00086200 6

E169 .M47 1928
Merz, Charles, 1893-
The great American band wagon

18164

ary

Books issued to borrowers may be kept two weeks. See date due on slip facing this pocket.

Five cents fine is charged for each day kept overtime.

Reserved books may be taken out overnight. Fifty cents fine for each hour kept overtime.

Books will not be issued to any student who owes a fine.

Each borrower is held responsible for all books drawn on his card and for all fines accruing on the same.